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**Explanation and analysis of the Islamic Republic  
of Iran's cultural policy**  
in regard to ancient Persian civilization  
**Achaemenid era**

by  
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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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Under the Supervision of Professor  
**Dr. Francesc-Josep de Rueda Roigé**

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Faculty of Philosophy and Letters  
Department of Art and Musicology



**Universitat Autònoma  
de Barcelona**

**Explicación y análisis de la política cultural de la  
República Islámica del Irán**  
con respecto a la civilización antigua del Imperio Persa  
**Era aqueménida**

por

**Seyed Mohammad Tabasi**

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# Abstract

The revolution of 1979 in Iran and the establishment of the Islamic Republic put an end to some 2500 years of monarchy. The present project aims to shed light on laws and policymaking of the Islamic Republic as well as the approach taken by the state organizations in the domain of culture. The approach of the Islamic Republic as an Islamic government towards ancient Iranian civilizations, especially the Achaemenids, indicates to what extent the government has made use of capacities of different sectors to protect, repair, and introduce Iranian art and ancient civilization.

This study aims at developing an interface for the interaction between thought and action to identify solutions in order to improve the existing conditions in terms of the IRI's cultural policy structure and offer a new supportive method for the country to benefit, more tangibly, from the potential advantages of ancient Iranian civilization.

This study uses a qualitative method and employs a descriptive-analytical approach for data collection using a combination of various methods. Two library research methods (documents and writings of the Achaemenids and documents related to the Islamic republic's cultural policies) and deep interviews (with managers and teachers in culture, arts and media, archeology, and sociology) were used to gather information.

In the first stage, the upstream and downstream documents, books, and articles related to the IRI's cultural policy were reviewed. It used the support sections of ancient Iran in the government as the study sample. In the second stage, senior managers and cultural intellectuals as influential figures were interviewed.

The subjects of the sample were selected through non-random (purposive) and judgmental samplings.

Findings of this research demonstrate that the Islamic republic is an opponent of ancient Iranian civilizations for the reasons described below:

- The Islamic revolution that led to the establishment of the Islamic Republic was a revolution against Pahlavi regime, which was the descendant of ancient Iranian civilizations



- The usage of ancient Iranian symbols, especially the Achaemenid, by opposition groups of the Islamic Republic
- The priority given to exporting the Islamic Revolution, promoting Shiite thoughts and spending budgets for it has resulted in paying less attention to the ancient civilization of Iran.

However, when it was in the government's interest, more attention was paid to the ancient civilization of Iran.

Based on the findings of this study, some suggestions could be made.

To create a coherent identity, achieve sustainable economic development, and turn Iran into a tourism hub using the capacity of the civilization of ancient Persia, the Islamic Republic and its opponents should end the polarization between Islamic Iran and ancient Persia. Additionally, authorities of the Islamic Republic should make a distinction between the Pahlavi government, which supported the Achaemenid civilization, and the relics and culture of the Achaemenid civilization. Last but not the least, modifying the educational system could lead to some positive developments in the protection, restoration, and introduction of Iran's ancient heritage.

**Keywords: The Islamic Republic of Iran, Achaemenids, Cultural politics**

## Resumen

La revolución de 1979 en Irán y el establecimiento de la República Islámica pusieron fin a unos 2500 años de monarquía. El presente proyecto tiene como objetivo arrojar luz sobre las leyes y la formulación de políticas de la República Islámica, así como la perspectiva adoptada por las organizaciones estatales en el ámbito de la cultura. El enfoque de la República Islámica como un gobierno islámico hacia las antiguas civilizaciones iraníes, especialmente las aqueménidas, indica hasta qué punto el gobierno ha hecho uso de las capacidades de diferentes sectores para proteger, reparar e introducir el arte iraní y la civilización antigua.

Este estudio tiene como objetivo desarrollar una interfaz para la interacción entre el pensamiento y la acción para identificar soluciones a fin de mejorar las condiciones existentes en términos de la estructura de la política cultural de la IRI y ofrecer un nuevo método de apoyo para que el país se beneficie, más tangiblemente, de las potenciales ventajas de la antigua civilización iraní.

En este trabajo hemos utilizado un método cualitativo y un enfoque descriptivo-analítico para la recolección de datos, utilizando una combinación de varias metodologías. Con el objetivo de recopilar la información se emplearon dos técnicas de investigación bibliotecaria (documentos y escritos de los aqueménidas, así como otros relacionados con las políticas culturales de la República Islámica) y entrevistas profundas (con gerentes y profesores de cultura, artes y medios, arqueología y sociología).

En una primera etapa se revisaron los documentos, libros y artículos anteriores y posteriores relacionados con la política cultural de la IRI. Se usaron las secciones de apoyo del antiguo Irán en el gobierno como muestra de estudio. En la segunda etapa entrevistamos a altos directivos e intelectuales culturales como figuras influyentes.

Los sujetos de la muestra fueron seleccionados a través de muestreos no aleatorios (intencionales) y de juicio.

Los resultados de esta investigación demuestran que la República Islámica se opone a las antiguas civilizaciones iraníes por las razones que se describen a continuación:

- La revolución islámica que condujo al establecimiento de la República Islámica fue una revolución contra el régimen Pahlavi, que era descendiente de las antiguas civilizaciones iraníes.

- El uso de antiguos símbolos iraníes, especialmente los aqueménidas, por parte de grupos de oposición de la República Islámica.
- La prioridad otorgada a la exportación de la Revolución Islámica, la promoción del pensamiento chiita y el consecuente gasto de los presupuestos han conducido a una menor atención a la antigua civilización de Irán.

Sin embargo, cuando había algún tipo de interés por parte del gobierno, se ha prestado más atención a la antigua civilización de Irán.

Con base a los hallazgos de este estudio, se pueden hacer algunas sugerencias.

Para crear una identidad coherente, lograr un desarrollo económico sostenible y convertir a Irán en un centro turístico, utilizando la capacidad de la civilización de la antigua Persia, la República Islámica y sus oponentes deben poner fin a la polarización entre el Irán islámico y la antigua Persia. Además, las autoridades de la República Islámica deben hacer una distinción entre el gobierno Pahlavi, que apoyó a la civilización aqueménida, y las reliquias y la cultura de la civilización aqueménida. Por último, aunque no menos importante, debemos decir que la modificación del sistema educativo podría conducir a algunos avances positivos en la protección, la restauración y la introducción del patrimonio antiguo de Irán.

**Palabras clave: República Islámica de Irán, Aqueménidas, Política cultural.**

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# Chapter 1: Generalities of research

## 1.1 Problem statement

Nowadays many countries have addressed their history and culture as a source to access cultural and economic development upon entering the service and postindustrial age and through reviewing their history, identity, and culture and updating these collective potentials. Today's world is a world of cultures because all aspects of human life have been converted into cultural and symbolic data by the coding that it represents. Therefore, all fields and domains of the collective life like history and historical identity have become consumable as cultural products upon engaging in cultural and represented relations.

This issue indicates the great importance of culture, history, and historical identity in the new communities. On the one hand, the importance indicates finding one's identity in the new age and the great importance of cultural particularism (paying attention to the history and national identities against the global culture) to gain a cultural image and to achieve national unity and consensus (Azadeh Armaki, 2014, p114). On the other hand, this historical identity whose actual representations are the historical heritage and sites, architectural and artistic styles remaining from the past, and the rituals, rites, and handicrafts have the potential to target tourists and customers to attract investors and bring wealth.

The governments generally adopt some special cultural policies to manage and organize these service potentials and to achieve these goals. These cultural goals are designed and formulated as governmental policies and plan to produce short-term and long-term visions to make efficient and helpful use of the potential (Azimidolatabadi and Salehiamiri, 2016, p.76). Also, governmental bodies in Iran have formulated some special cultural policies to make use of the potential,

considering the great capacities of the country in terms of having a long historical and ancient background, to achieve sustainable cultural and economic development. Meanwhile, we should consider the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in Iran as a serious issue that has made a distinction between the Islamic system and the ancient Iranian civilization. The Islamic system and Iran before the 1979 revolution are different in basics and conflict in some respects.

The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance<sup>1</sup> and Ministry of Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism<sup>2</sup> have been the main bodies in charge of cultural affairs since the Islamic Revolution taking into consideration the issue of historical and identity capacities of the country every year by formulating the macro and micro cultural policies.

The main issue addressed in the present study is the identification of the cultural policies adopted, formulated, and implemented by the governmental bodies (since the Islamic Revolution) in the field of cultural heritage left by Iran's ancient civilization and especially the investigation into supporting or not supporting the civilization heritage of Achaemenes Empire. These policies are to be studied and recognized to determine the volume and quantity of cultural policies and programs, the quality of these policies, the method of applying and operationalizing them, and finally the mindset and ideology of the political ruling structure towards these capacities. Finally, the policies are addressed to determine to the extent the political structure has succeeded in culturally and economically using these potentials.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.farhang.gov.ir](http://www.farhang.gov.ir) (you should use Iran IP) or copy this Persian word (وزارت فرهنگ و ارشاد اسلامی) and paste it in Google.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mcth.ir> (you should use Iran IP) or copy this Persian word (وزارت میراث فرهنگی، گردشگری و صنایع دستی) and paste it in Google.

## **1.2. Significance of the study**

Iran is one of the countries having a lot of historical heritage because of its long history. Iran as the first great historical empire in the world and as the country that has always maintained its political and historical life as an independent geographical area enjoys a powerful historical and civil identity (Abbasi, 2011, p 21).

The remaining cultural heritage, symbols, architecture, stone carving, and handicrafts include an extensive historical range from the ancient period, the middle history, and Islamic history to the new history. This diversity and wide range of the artistic heritage along with the relatively great quantity of the remaining heritage, and also the cultural and identity repertoire has provided a very useful opportunity to move towards cultural and economic development.

According to the official statistics released by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, there are about six hundred thousand historical sites left from different historical periods of which about 36 thousand have been added to the list of national heritage and 24 have been added to the World Heritage List. Also, Iran is the third greatest producer of handicrafts in the world and ranks thirty-ninth among the countries exporting these handicrafts to other countries across the world (<http://www.mcth.ir>). This considerable diversity both in quality and quantity suggests the great capacity of Iran in terms of cultural and identity-building resources that can be used to form an outstanding national identity and also to provide an opportunity to achieve economic growth.

Therefore, conducting a scientific and academic study to investigate the cultural policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards supporting (preserving, keeping, restoring, and introducing) the historical ancient heritage and the quality of these resources to achieve the above-mentioned national goals seems to be more necessary now. The necessity of conducting such a study stems from the fact that recognizing

the cultural policies adopted by the main bodies in charge of cultural affairs will lead to a deeper recognition of these policies and their shortcomings which will determine the general approach of the political structure towards these special potentials. Also, the recognition of the organizations performing parallel tasks in the field of culture and being informed of their political approaches provide harmony in the cultural institutions of the country thus wasting the financial and human resources.

### **1.3. Goal**

The present study has been conducted on this subject to:

- Introduce the attitude and discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the rules by applying them to the culture and art.
- Become informed of the effectiveness of these rules in preserving and restoring the civilization heritage of ancient Iran.
- Become informed that to what extent this set of rules works satisfactorily to introduce and promulgate the civilization of ancient Iran.
- Recognize the duties of the organizations operating in the field of culture and the way they operate to support the civilization and art of ancient Iran.
- Recognize the methods used by the authorities in this regard and other methods which could have been used.
- Providing solutions for improved exploitation of the capacities of the Iranian ancient history in our present society.
- Using the advertisement of the Achaemenes eras as important parts of ancient Iranian history.

## **1.4. Research questions**

### **1.4.1. Primary question:**

- To what extent has the cultural policy adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran supported the art and civilization of ancient Iran?

### **1.4.2. Secondary questions:**

- To what extent do the rules enforced by the Islamic Republic of Iran support the art and civilization of ancient Iran?
- To what extent do the cultural and educational organizations in the Islamic Republic of Iran support the art and civilization of ancient Iran?
- To what extent of the capacity of other fields (sports, art, politics, etc.) utilized to introduce the civilization of ancient Iran? (Use of ancient names and symbols for successful teams in sports, use of ancient images on the national money, producing movies and animations around ancient Iran and participating in international exhibitions, etc.)
- Which official and unofficial relevant institutions are involved in formulating and determining the policies?
- To what extent do side factors such as (foreign culture, conflict with the Pahlavi regime, and the use of symbols of ancient Iran by groups opposed to the Islamic Republic) affect the cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran?

## **1.5. Hypothesis**

There is no opposition to preserving and protecting the relics and symbols of the ancient Iranian civilization in the post-revolutionary constitution, written by both Islamists and nationalists after toppling Pahlavi's dynasty in 1979. However, the Islamic tone dominating the discourse after the revolution in Iran did not show signs of care for protecting the ancient heritage for the most part. The government did not even have much success in introducing and preserving part of Iran's heritage about Iran's Islamic civilization. Compared to similar Islamic countries such as Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

On the other hand, the government officials, elected directly or indirectly by votes, are required to follow the principles of the constitution. Yet, during the past four decades, Iran's law has changed due to changes in Islamic ideology in the country. Government organizations, who are in charge of the culture and art, could not properly support the civilization of ancient Iran due to these changes in principles and for other various reasons such as inadequate budgeting, lack of knowledge of new technologies, parallel work, and more inclination to Islamic culture than the ancients.

Another contributing factor is the statehood of most affairs, especially cultural affairs in the system of the Islamic Republic, which prevented the government and the private sector from properly using other capacities effective in supporting the cultural sectors, such as the use of images of ancient buildings and designs on the national currency of the country, holding various cultural and artistic festivals with ancient names and symbols, making animation, making films, and even using these symbols in sports competitions. This negligence stems from an attitude in the system prioritizing revolutionary thinking and Shiite culture. The most common of this attitude was in the first decade after the revolution to the extent that the officials not

only did not use other capacities to support the ancient civilization but sometimes acted against it, taking steps in the direction of revolutionary thinking. For example, Iran's most popular sports team changes its ancient name from Persepolis to Piroozi, a revolutionary name. There are signs that this extremist attitude has loosened up in recent years. One of the manifestations is that the same sports team has returned to its former name in recent years.

In order to better understand cultural policies in society and how they are implemented and responded to, we must know the attitudes of the dominant section of the society. There have been two main cultural approaches by the government in post-revolution Iran. The first approach is when the government would adjust its extremist behavior over time due to feeling the least threatened. However, the government would become aggressive when feeling pressured by foreign cultures, opposition groups outside the country, and changes in attitudes among Iranian people. Aside from the domestic problems being witnessed in the Iranian society, the constant tension and conflict between the US and Iran led the government to go into survival mode, becoming more ignorant of the cultural aspects while focusing more on the political side. The current situation and the defensive approach have deprived the Islamic Republic of Iran of the conditions for making long-term decisions.

In an overview of the contemporary history of Iran, it is evident that before the Pahlavi period, the governments did not pay attention to the imperial heritage of Iran, mainly the peak Achaemenids and Sassanids, due to a lack of sufficient information. *Shahnameh*<sup>3</sup> was the only manifestation of Iranian heritage back then. With the beginning of the Pahlavi period, more attention was paid to the imperial

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<sup>3</sup> The *Shahnameh* or *Shahnama* is a long epic poem written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi between c. 977 and 1010 CE and is the national epic of Greater Iran.

heritage of Iran. We witnessed its peak in the second Pahlavi era when Mohammad Reza Shah was in power. The Shah's excessive attention to the ancient times of Iran and his lack of attention to the prevailing religious attitude in society became one of the reasons for the fall of the Pahlavi Empire and the establishment of the Islamic system in Iran. In post-revolution Iran, the new government (Islamic Republic) paid less attention to the civilization of ancient Iran with the justification that the ancient heritage was founded based on the imperial system and has a different religious structure from Islam, which is mainly oppositional. However, there are groups among Iranians with national concerns, both in the past and present. The pressure from these nationalists at the beginning of the Islamic Republic, along with some domestic and foreign economic and political issues in recent decades, has sometimes led the government to pay more attention to antiquity.

## **Chapter 2: Cultural policy (I.R.Iran)**

### **2.1 Introduction**



Today's world has entered a new stage of economic trends and procedures since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and particularly since the 1970s and 1980s that is called by many sociologists as Post-Fordism (Seidman, 2019, p 230). Nowadays the global trends in economy and culture have reached a new stage as opposed to the Fordist economy that was considered as the main feature of the modern societies and economic modernity where the main indicators were serial production, emphasis on the light and heavy industries, and the priority given to the production overconsumption.

In the new Post-Fordist stage, the main emphasis has been placed on services rather than industrial production. The new societies devote most of their effort to service-related issues and wealth creation in this way (Ritzer, 2015, p 752). In such conditions, the role of human, cultural, and historical resources is of great importance because all these resources can be used as the potential to provide increasingly important services. For example, it is possible to point out the extensive growth and development of tourism, attention to handicrafts, special attention to the historical sites and heritage in today's world by different countries to attract wealth. In the new post-industrial age, as was mentioned before, the main emphasis is to achieve service countries and to make a transition from the industrial countries. This stems from some issues, such as the increasing importance of environmental issues, extensive activities of the syndicate of workers in support of difficult working conditions of the workers in the industries, decrease in the skill-oriented man force, the transition from the hard and manual jobs to the soft and intellectual jobs, etc. (Baudrillard, 2010, p 218). In the post-industrial country, the Fordist production principles have been transformed and the economic and cultural values are described especially. One of the transformed features is the shift from the emphasis on

production to consumption. Another important feature is the shift from the emphasis on natural resources to human resources.

As for the first feature, it should be said that a turn has occurred towards the consumers by making the economy and culture service-oriented as opposed to the industrial age that turned all its attention towards the producers (Idem, p 216). Following such a turn, the field of consumption has been generally given priority over the field of production. In this regard, some sociologists like Baudrillard, Lyotard, Jameson, et al. have classified the new societies as the “consumer society”. The consumer society, as opposed to the producer society, adopts a special attitude towards the consumer and does its utmost to provide the required services to the consumers. Thus, there will be no serial and mass production in such a society, but production especially takes into consideration the customer and consumers’ needs.

The second feature shows that the attention and emphasis on human resources and human-cultural achievements are of great importance for the new service and consumer societies considering the economic, social, and cultural protocols and manifestos that seek the transition from the industrial stage (Smith, 2017, p 182). Some of such resources are historical areas and sites, deep-seated historical traditions, rituals, rites, and historical-religious ceremonies, etc. These resources have gained greater importance because they are considered as the potentials that can create great wealth for the countries through attracting tourists, and consumers who are keen on culture, etc. For example, we can point out some countries like UAE and Turkey that have managed to turn into important tourist poles in the world and thereby achieve considerable sustainable development.

In such conditions, resource management is of great importance. Hence, management science in today’s world has attracted a lot of attention such that the

key roles in the industrial society assigned to the scientists and scholars were assigned to the managers in the new service societies (Craib, 2013, p 97). The management of these resources helps to adopt the best, most scientific, and efficient approaches to make optimum economic, social and cultural use of them, and to estimate and implement the required policies to achieve sustainable development through the service sector.

Cultural policy-making tries, as one of the new interdisciplinary sciences with a special common point with management, to help the governments to make cultural policies in any aspect of the social affairs to achieve the best and most efficient cultural policies to manage each sector (Azimidolatabadi and Salehiamiri, 2016, p 11). In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted some particular cultural policies to manage and plan the historical and ancient heritage, architecture, and sites, and other historical and ritual potentials of the country, and one of the main goals of the present study is to study these policies. In general, the present study aims to study the cultural policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the method used to support the historical and ancient heritage of the Achaemenid Empire and to study the ruling class's approach to and perspective on the potential capability to achieve cultural and economic development.

## **2.2 The nature of culture**

Culture has conveyed a moral sense for a long time. If the word culture in English has been derived from cultivation, then the word in Persian has been used to mean politeness, wisdom, perception, and the like (Pahlavan, 1999, p 17). Culture is an interlinked set of thinking, feeling, and acting styles including a large number of people. Therefore, it should be said that culture is acquired and is not a genetic

endowment. Gidz considers culture as a set of values<sup>4</sup> of the members of a certain group i.e. the norms they follow and the goods they produce (Gidz, p 36).

Some researchers attribute three seemingly paradoxical features to culture:

- Culture is general while being particular; that is to say, this common and public heritage is seen in all human societies; however, while it is shared by the public each social group has its particular cultural rules and rituals.
- Culture is variable while being invariable: All social and non-social phenomena change to meet the requirements of time, and place and according to the needs, inventions, experiences, immigrations, etc. However, the changes in the field of culture take place so slowly that they seem to be invariable.
- It is obligatory to accept the culture while being optional: People acquire the values in their families unconsciously, but they are not limited in the cultural framework of their families and societies because of their physical, intellectual, scientific, and social characteristics, and they are free to go beyond it (Salehiamiri, 2016, p 36).

Iranian culture features different aspects because of its long history. The rich Iranian culture is one of the valuable capital that can be changed into one of the most effective factors in the cultural and economic development in Iran if it is studied, recognized and its different aspects are explained. Iranian culture is rooted in the prehistoric periods. The Iranian culture can be likened to a beautiful prism every single side of which reflects an image of the factors making up the prism.

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<sup>4</sup> Culture consists of a set of beliefs, institutions, language, and lifestyle, speaking style and thinking styles. This set is a unified and dynamic reality that includes the class, generational and regional diversity, and different minorities (Ashtariyan, 2013, p 23).

Iranian prehistoric legends and myths, Iran's ancient culture, the effect of rich cultures like the ancient culture of old civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, the effect of ethnic and linguistic amalgamation that has been always the distinct feature of Iran, the effect of the profound Islamic culture and its special Iranian version, etc. are different manifestations of the Iranian culture can be observed in all aspects of people's lives in this land, from the architecture to urban development to literature, myths and popular culture (Shams and Amini, 2013, p 82).

One of the notable components of Iranian culture is ethnic and linguistic diversity. Iran enjoys a special status in terms of the wide range of ethnicity in the region. Some different ethnicities include Fars, Turk, Kurd, Lur, Baluch, etc. Some of them use a language different from Farsi and some use some different dialects of Farsi, and a wide range of cultural diversity is observed among them. Iran is one of the countries enjoying the historical and geographical background and the necessary potential required to form a powerful cultural pluralism. This cultural pluralism can help cultural development and form a pluralist national cultural identity.

The ethnic and linguistic diversity is valuable in that they both feature some ceremonies, rituals, rites, and special cultures, and they enjoy a great potential to have a cultural interaction and dialogue where each of them can prove useful in strengthening a cultural and national identity (Hajhosseini et al., 2013, p 45). On the other hand, the customs and rituals of these ethnicities can prepare a powerful ground for attracting tourism, developing tourism, and finally moving towards sustainable economic development.

### **2.2.1. Static and dynamic culture**

The dynamic culture borrows whatever it needs from other cultures if it needs to obviate any needs, and it domesticates the borrowed items thereby enriching itself. On the contrary, the static culture disconnects any relationship with the other

cultures and is disintegrated. A distinction must be drawn between cultural dynamism and cultural self-loss<sup>5</sup>. Cultural dynamism means willingly accepting the elements of the non-native cultures helping to enrich the culture of the society.

The static society fails to make a fundamental transformation in economic and cultural production because of different historical and production factors, and such societies follow a fixed trend where the traditions rule over the people through force and domination.

Generally, the dynamic culture can counter new challenges. In fact, not only is the dynamic culture not afraid of the new challenges but welcomes them enthusiastically and compensates its gaps by loaning from other cultures. It seems that the cultural organizations and institutions in Iran are not dynamic enough and no considerable transformation can be observed in the course of their activities (Salehiamiri, 2016, p 181).

### **2.2.2. Official and unofficial culture**

There are two types of values in societies, the official culture is based on the beliefs, values, and norms that are permissible in the government's view. On the other hand, the unofficial culture is made up of the values, beliefs, and norms that form spontaneously and it is the shelter for those seeking to have their own beliefs, values, and judgments aside from the cultural and ideological framework of the governments. There is some type of conflict, heterogeneity, and amalgamation of the values, beliefs, and behaviors of the public (unofficial values) towards the dominant values in the society (official values). Whenever the official system tries

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<sup>5</sup> Unconditional acceptance of the foreign culture and the attempt to westernize the culture creates a serious social and economic crisis (Salehiamiri, 2016, p 154).

to increase production without taking into account the cultural needs of society, this conflict occurs and increases (Salehiamiri, 2016, p 81).

The people in the society accept the official culture because of the power beyond it. However, they do not internalize it and they accept the unofficial culture as internalized culture and in the framework of the personal, family, and group values and attitudes. The lack of coherent integration and common cultural discourse among the people and the cultural system gradually forms this duality in the society. The cultural damage results from the development of the rift between these two groups. Thus, the cultural damage results from the lack of integration and consensus among the elite, policy-makers, managers, structures, systems, goals, programs, and functions of the cultural system.

### **2.2.3. The idea of cultural invasion <sup>6</sup>and psychology of fear**

The roots of the idea of cultural invasion can be traced back to the concept of the psychology of fear. The psychology of fear and decision-making is mainly based on the fact that a human being is not a rational and considerate creature, but it is a creature making decisions to avoid loss and based on fear (Kohanman).

One of the main duties of the main bodies in the Islamic Republic of Iran is to counter the cultural invasion by providing general cultural security by producing and reproducing the values of the Islamic Revolution. What the authorities mean by cultural security is the preservation of the values raised from the Islamic Revolution, in other words providing security for them against different domestic and foreign invasions. It is assumed that the values of the political system make up the basis of

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<sup>6</sup> Cultural invasion is a one-way trend to influence and have a negative cultural impact on some other culture thereby having destructive impacts on the target culture where some elements enter the invaded culture that are not compatible with the elements in the given target culture, and maybe it denies and rejects the target culture in many cases. In fact, the cultural invasion includes some destructive impacts, and its impacts are always considered “negative” and it is not considered desirable by any society.

the existing political and social system. and the Islamic Republic of Iran considers these values as cultural values because they are against the materialistic values of capitalism as viewed by the Islamic Republic of Iran<sup>7</sup>.

The fear or in another sense the worry is an important factor in the cultural policy-making in Iran. The reflection of this model in cultural decision-making gives priority to cultural threats. It can be argued that according to this model, the worries for the cultural threats increase the fear thus prompting authorities to make more conservative decisions in the fearful conditions. In such conditions, the tendency to identify and remove the threats is greater than the tendency to use initiative in making decisions (Ashtariyan, 2012, p177).

### **2.3. Cultural policy**

In today's cultural world, a particular type of policy and approach has been formed, that is known as the cultural policies, considering the greater symbolic sense of the realities, realities being coded, and human facts in the form of the symbolic codes, representations, and simulacra. The cultural policy is the characteristic of the age when all human and social aspects have become cultural and symbolic. Therefore, the method of managing, planning, and controlling these fields has adopted some cultural policies and approaches according to such transformations.

The concept of cultural policy is one of the new concepts that has attracted attention across the world over the last four decades. Considering culture as one of the main fields of development and the possibility of cultural management to make changes in the cultural elements, and achieving the predetermined goals, and paying attention to the role of the governments in cultural planning have prepared an appropriate

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<sup>7</sup> Though it seems that the attitudes and behaviors of some authorities have changed after the Islamic Revolution, they try to hide these changes.



ground for the formation of the concept of cultural policy. The cultural policy is a type of official agreement and consensus among the authorities and those in charge of the cultural affairs concerning the recognition, determination, and formulation of the main principles and priorities that are necessary for the cultural activities, and it will be a guide and a set of instructions for the cultural managers (Masjedjamei, 2017). The cultural policy is a descriptive compound noun where the policy has been modified by the adjective *cultural*. A cultural policy is a certain type of policy whose starting point is the culture in the general sense. The cultural policy is different from the political culture or the culture of policy because the first one indicates the political aspect of culture and the second one indicates the cultural procedures of politics (Azimidolatabadi and Salehiamiri, 2016, p 43). However, the cultural policy is something different that is to a large extent the result of the change and revision of the Marxist discourse and its amendment, that is to say, a discourse in the classic form of which the culture and policy are merely the superstructures or a function of the economic structure (base) while the invention of the concept of cultural policy indicates the superstructure's relative independence of the (policy, culture, art, etc.) the economic base whose components can create some particular compounds (Fazeli and Ghelich, 2014, p 68).

The cultural policy on the other hand means the independence of the culture to act as an independent variable. In other words, this concept indicates that it is possible to design a set of policies and approaches that are formed and formulated under the influence of cultural issues and concerns. From the cultural policy-making standpoint, it is possible to design and formulate special cultural approaches for each human and social phenomenon to determine the future horizons of the phenomenon in the field of production, consumption, etc. (Homayoun & Jafarihaftkhani, p 5). For example, in the field of tourism, cultural policy-making consists of the formulation

of some procedures and policies to develop tourism with sexual and cultural qualities that find their starting point in the public culture. In this example, culture as an independent variable intends to influence tourism as a human phenomenon by being operationalized as some policies, approaches and attempts to implement these policies.

Nowadays, cultural policymaking which considers itself to be responsible for making cultural policies and procedures, considering the increasing importance of culture, enjoys a special status in the government's planning and at the macro level. The reason for this increasing importance of culture can be traced back to the growth of civility and development of the global cultures, the transition from the industrial phase of modernity, change in the definition of some fundamental concepts, such as work and leisure time, and also the growth in the soft management and the emphasis on the software procedures in place of the hardware approach in the field of management and planning (Afshari et al., 2018, p 11). In such conditions where the cultural policy-making as a very updated planning approach tries to control and intervene in the public culture and to promote it through making the policies with cultural content, making specific cultural plans to implement these policies thereby affecting the future horizons of the human phenomena.

### **2.3.1. The dominant approaches in cultural policy-making: idealist, objectivist and subjectivist**

The idealist policy-making is formed to realize the general goals where the policy-makers take into account some macro perspectives and goals, and they seek to achieve these goals and do not pay any attention to the problems they face on the way to achieve the ideals. It is necessary to distinguish the idealist and objectivist policy-making from the so-called fantasy and delusional policy-making. It is obvious that there is no subjectivist policy-making in the policy-making texts and

literature, and basically, such a thing is not policy-making. This expression has been used here to show how fantasy replaces policy-making and that idealism is not necessarily equal to fantasy and the ambiguous illusions must not be mistaken for the ideal policy-making (Ashtariyan, 2012, p 68). The managers in the field of culture should always remember their macro cultural goals, but they should not be very ambitious, and they should also remember that their decisions can bring about no revolution in the field of culture and the cultural managers should humbly take actions in a limited range and of course to achieve the macro goals. This leads to an avoidance of the illusion in the policy-making structure.

Objectivist policy-making, as opposed to idealist policy-making, tries to concentrate on the objective and tangible affairs and on the subjects that are observable and calculable. The objectivist policy-making does not seek to create an abstract and metaphysical totality of the ideal and superior culture but does its utmost to manage and lead the particular examples of the culture. In this form of policy-making, observable effectiveness is the main and fundamental criterion, thus we should avoid thinking generally, issuing general and abstract rules about culture, and holding a utopic perspective on this issue. Objectivist cultural policy-making is especially used in developed western countries.

The group holding idealist perspectives on the culture and policy-making restrict themselves within the frameworks of ideological issues, and sometimes they consider cultural policy-making as transcending the issue-oriented nature to a large extent and they find it as being more goal-oriented and idealist, that is to say, implementing the cultural policy to realize a goal is to promulgate a value and achieve an ideal. The expectations these people have of the cultural conditions of the social conflict with the group where the culture and cultural policies are defined in the framework of public cultural services and goods.

The culture is led towards homogenization in the idealist policy-making. Cultural homogenization, as the name suggests, seeks to homogenize the culture of the society and it considers its culture as highly great and moral and based on the geometrical plan of the values, norms, and behaviors in the social arena provided by the cultural homogenization. This strategy emphasizes on homogenization of culture and suppression of the micro-cultures and it seeks to achieve cultural control. There are some particular problems and consequences in using this method, for instance, it can lead the society towards political order rather than the cultural order and this method turns the society into a torn apart and vulnerable society (though it features some cultural order and unity). Some components in ideological policy-making like worldview, values, and institutions form the cultural policies. These components form the affairs of the strategic macro policy in the field of culture and lead policy-making. Hence, it is necessary to first understand the worldview and values of the political power to study cultural decisions and policies. Cultural policy-making is in a close and unbreakable relationship with power-related considerations. The role of cultural policy-making in strengthening and stabilizing the bases of the political power in a country has changed culture into one of the indispensable subjects in the agenda adopted by the governments and public institutions (Ashtariyan, 2012, p 48).

#### **2.4.The basics of cultural policy and cultural policy-making in Iran**

In today's world, culture has attracted greater attention than any other subject. The reason for this should be sought in the rapid growth rate of modernity and civilization in the new age and place-time coincidence of humans, development of the informative and communicative networks, increasing symbolization of the human and social realities, and appearance of the new age of information and post-industrial data-based society. In such conditions, the formation and formulation of a set of policies with cultural content that is called the cultural policy have been proposed,

and along with the proposition of the concept of cultural policy seems to be justifiable.

The policy-making system in Iran started from the constitution as the basis of the laws after which a set of official documents reflect the policies of the system. The first document is the vision plan that has been formulated by Expediency Discernment Council <sup>8</sup>and then will be announced by the supreme leader after being approved by him.

This document is called the general policies of the system, but it is not a law and it should be changed into a bill and be approved by the parliament to become a law. The next stage is the budget law that determines the executive validity of the plan after which the plan is executed by the executive bodies. Thus, the decision-making hierarchy in the Islamic Republic of Iran can be stated as follows: leadership and the Expediency Discernment Council, the parliament of Iran, and then the government. In the cultural decision-making hierarchy in the Islamic Republic of Iran that is a top-down hierarchy, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution<sup>9</sup> should be taken into account that is the second greatest decision-making body after the supreme leader. This body makes laws. The authorities in this body are of course also bound to take into account the policies announced by the supreme leader. In the lower levels in this cultural hierarchy, parliament of Iran, Management and Planning Organization of Iran (MPO), general culture council, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization, and

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<sup>8</sup> Expediency Discernment Council is one of the main bodies of the Islamic Republic of Iran whose main responsibility is to settle the disagreements between Iran's parliament and the Council of Guardians.

<sup>9</sup> Establishment of Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (established on December 10<sup>th</sup> 1984) directed by the president is one of the bodies in Islamic Republic of Iran that was established after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran by order of Ayatollah Khomeini. The development of the influence of Islamic culture in different aspects of the society and enhancement of the cultural revolution and promotion of the public culture and cleaning the scientific and cultural environments of the materialistic thoughts and denial of westernization were some of the goals of this council.

finally the cultural office (deputy for supreme leader supervision and cabinet) are considered as the expert headquarters.

Cultural policy-making that is responsible for formulating and planning cultural policies relies on some particular cultural and social grounds. These social and cultural backgrounds vary depending on each society and its culture.

Therefore, any type of cultural policy-making should take into consideration the cultural and social requirements of the target society. Naturally, formulating and planning the cultural policies in Iran should take into consideration the cultural and social bases in the society. The Iranian culture and identity are two very major created components one of which is rooted in the civilization of ancient Iran and the other one is a result of the Islamic civilization and culture. Also, the existence of diverse ethnicities, languages, and dialects has made several regional and local cultures coexist each of which features some differences and particular cultural characteristics to others while feeding the national culture and identity. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the formation of an Islamic ruling system, Islamic culture was proposed as the dominant culture in social and political arenas. Following the dominance of Islamic culture, cultural policy-making also has assumed a religious overtone over the last forty years such that every form of cultural policy should take into consideration the requirements that must be observed according to Islam. Therefore, the current cultural policy in Iran is revolutionary and Islamic.

The first cultural planning in Iran after the Islamic Revolution was proposed under the title of cultural principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1992 and it was approved by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution on 11.08.1992 (Salehiamiri, 2016, p 118). The cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the

policy of the Islamic Revolution. Islamic Revolution means that Islamic culture has been set as the basis of all aspects of individual and social life. Some fundamental points about this policy-making should be born in mind. In the cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the cultural, revolutionary, and Islamic policy derived from the Islamic worldview and anthropology, the views and attitudes of Imam Khomeini dominate the cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It has been stated in the foreword of this policy written by Masjedjamei<sup>10</sup> that the cultural policy is a type of official agreement and consensus among the authorities in charge of the relevant issues as for recognition, determination, and formulation of the main principles and priorities that are necessary for cultural activities and it will be some guidance and instruction for the cultural managers.

The main feature of the Islamic Revolution has been to set the Islamic culture as the main criterion and basis in all individual and social aspects of the country. Therefore, considering the authenticity of Islamic culture in the political ruling in Iran, it should be mentioned that the Islamic Revolution has been a cultural revolution (Masjedjamei, 2017). In this regard, the cultural policy adopted by the Islamic Republic has been derived from the Islamic worldview and anthropology and it is based on some fundamentals and concepts such as the following:

- The dominance of monotheistic worldview in all aspects of individual and social life aspects and the fundamental role and effect of the belief in the principles and secondary aspects of religion like a divine revelation, prophecy, Imamate, justice, resurrection, Tabarra, and Tawalla in the Islamic society.
- The eternity of humans and his inborn nobility and dignity as Allah's deputy on earth and Allah's trustee who enjoys willpower and free will, and can think

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<sup>10</sup> Former Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance in the administration of Sayyid Mohammad Khatami

logically and choose His fate and also the role of wisdom and experience on the way of His evolution.

- Enjoying divine nature that is rooted in growth and originates from it, and what brings him good.
- Equality among the humans in the creation and the lack of any distinction between the colors, races, and classes made up by humans and the universal message of Islam and the demand for public cooperation in performing good and humane deeds
- The materialistic and moral nature of the human and His potential of growth and promotion in all aspects of individual, social, materialistic and moral, physical and spiritual, rational and emotional, and their accompaniment
- Well-wishing, perfectionism, idealism, unlimited scientific capacity, and the natural tendency of humans towards science and wisdom, beauty, holiness, worship, and ethical good
- The state of being generative and power of belief in creating the moral values and ethical virtues, and creating the spirits of independence, courage, self-esteem, and strengthening the human relations in the society
- The capacity of the humans to be educated and actualization of human's talents and creativities by preparing the ground for a monolithic, justice-oriented, and knowledge-oriented society that is based on Jihad and Ijtihad, that is also moderate and realistic that enjoys intellectual discourses and discussions, criticisms, and scientific research, taking lessons and gaining historical experiences



- The authenticity of the moral values and ethical virtues in the Islamic society and the high status of piety, science, and Jihad in determining the value of dignity and virtue of humans
- The potential of humans to be influenced by the positive and negative factors of the social environment and its cultural vermin and obstacles and the responsibility of the Islamic ruling system for cleaning the environment, administering justice, providing people with the right to vote on all affairs considering the necessity for eliminating the reasons for and factors involved in preparing the ground for atheism and hypocrisy, poverty and corruption, oppression and tyranny, domination and arrogance.

The investigation into the upstream documents shows that the frameworks used in the cultural policy-making in post-revolution Iran that are used to value issues are presented in three different ways: first of all, “nobility” is presented along with the particular social and political relations. In this sense, cultural policy-making seeks to sustain the Iranian-Islamic historical identity. The dominant attitude towards this policy-making is the existence of invariant and stable identity-building elements whose historical continuity indicates the desirability and efficiency of these elements in creating the ideal society. This model of identity suggests particular social ethics the protection of which has been described as the duties of the government and official bodies. The second concept is “dignity” which is used in the universal and equality-oriented sense. In this sense, the emphasis of cultural policy-making is placed on social equality to revive the human dignity of different classes of people. In this regard, the dignity-oriented approach seeks to create equality among different social and cultural groups (especially the religious and ethnic minorities) through recognizing their birthright (Baratalipour, 2019, p 136).

The third approach is being added to the valuing frameworks of cultural policy-making in Iran under the influence of the cultural pluralism originating from new philosophy which can be called the “originality” approach. This approach is a response to the obvious consequences of the two previous approaches that were manifested as discriminative profiteering and equating justice-seeking. Establishing the cultural policy based on originality means that “the way it is specific” should be noted in identifying the identity. In this sense, being ethics-oriented has been considered as an inner voice according to which the only way to achieve the good life is to go through self-consciousness, and the issue of ethics is proposed as following the inner nature voice. Such a perspective leads to pluralist ethics making it possible to be particular and different. The originality approach is not a holistic approach making generalities as opposed to the two previous approaches, but it emphasizes the specific nature and locality of the policies. This approach tries to provide the possibility of preserving the cultural differences among all groups, ethnicities, religions, etc. by formulating local policies that do not make generalities (Idem, 136).

According to a general estimation and the assumed fundamentals that are mainly based on religious origins, the cultural policies in Iran after the Islamic Revolution have some positive features including creating great values and concepts, countering the global culture, preventing profiteering in culture, and paying attention to the infrastructures of (Islamic) culture. On the other hand, the problems and negative features of the cultural policies in Iran include the extent of the concept of culture, generality, being governmental, ambiguity, paradox, lack of prioritization, and appropriate segregation (Azad Armaki and Noah Manouri, 2012). The study into the policy-making experience of different countries shows that it is possible to distinguish between two general types of policy-making: one of them is supervision and support and the other one is incumbency. In the first type, two kinds of

governmental intervention can be distinguished i.e., the minimum intervention (connected with the minimum states) and the maximum involvement (connected with the maximum states). In the second type, the government neither intervenes in nor supervises policy-making, but it is responsible for supervising policy-making (Shahramniya and Chalmaghani, 2009, p 14). Considering different administrations taking office in post-revolutionary Iran, each of which adopted a different approach, different types of relationships between the governments and policy-making have been experienced, and sometimes a mixture of approaches could be identified in those administrations. For instance, in the reform era, <sup>11</sup>a more or less supervision-oriented relationship of the minimum type could be recognized while the fundamentalist administrations <sup>12</sup>have mainly adopted a maximum approach towards policy-making issues.

In general, it can be said that the Islamic Republic of Iran can be considered a maximum state in the field of cultural policies. Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution has been considered as the supreme authority responsible for policy-making and determining the policies of coordinating and guiding the cultural, educational, and research affairs in the framework of the general policies of the political system whose decisions must be obeyed as they are considered as laws. The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, thus, considers itself as the authority officially in charge of describing the general attitude towards the basics, goals, and principles of the cultural activities and policies of the country, thus it approved the “Principles of cultural policy of Islamic Republic of Iran” in 1992.

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<sup>11</sup> The reformist Party in Iran presided by the president Khatami could take on the executive power in the country.

<sup>12</sup> in the Post-Revolutionary years in Iran, there have been some trends, against the liberal intellectuals supporting the changes in religious structures, that have been willing to preserved the present conditions in the country and have been against changes in the traditional structures and beliefs. Now, the word “Fundamentalism” is used by these people to describe their attitude.

This document is a description of the basics, goals, priorities, and policies orienting and setting a framework for the activities of the government in the field of culture (Vahid, 2013, p 300-301). The attitude of those formulating the principles of cultural policy is a top-down attitude and it is a governmental perspective on all cultural arenas of the country. Accordingly, a large part of the cultural activities is performed by the government, and the activities in the relevant activities of the private sector heavily depend on the government (Vahid, 2007, p 15).

#### **2.4.1. Challenges of cultural policy-making in Iran**

Some basic points can be observed in the economic report issued by the Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) in 1991 as non-realization of the cultural plans proposed mentioned in the first development plan; the points are: the shortage of expert man force, lack of coordination between the bodies responsible for executing cultural plans, task duplication and parallel work, appropriate publicity to lead people towards culture and art and finally the lack of and untimeliness of the information and statistics required by the culture and art sector, and it is expected that the authorities make a solid decision to solve this problem by identifying the reasons for the lack of success in this regard. However, the Management and Planning Organization of Iran issued a report in 2006 in the Plan Weekly on the government's performance in the field of culture. The report shows that not only no cultural problem has been solved over 15 years, but the problems increased (Salehiamiri, 2016, p 172).

Firstly, the first challenge facing the execution of the cultural policy in Iran is the multiplicity of social tastes in the field of culture while the multiplicities usually are in favor of the most extremist social layers and as a result, any type of policy or cultural activity whether national, ritual, religious or even international are executed according to the tastes of these social layers (Ashtariyan, 2012, p 245). Secondly,

policy-making is an instrument used to activate the ideal, goal, or value. What we can observe in many so-called policy-making cases in Iran is nothing but repeating the beautiful ideals and goals. This general atmosphere which exists under the title of idealists or being value-oriented in cultural policy-making in Iran has isolated operational planning and operational attitude in executing the cultural policies. Devising the operational plans can be an effective step towards objectifying the ideal goals and creating an appropriate executive mechanism to evaluate the cultural policies.

The third challenge is the cultural budget in Iran which has many paradoxes. The governmental budget in the fields of industry, services, and commerce is greater than that of the cultural sector while the private sectors in Iran are generally weak and the private sector in the field of culture has fallen much behind other fields. On the other hand, the government exerts indisputable domination over different subgroups in the field of culture in the economic rent-oriented atmosphere of the country, and budgets provided by the government to promulgate the values involve some consequences like superficial attitude, being affected by vulgar public taste, sanctimony, and hypocrisy. The tasks are done in Iran as cultural planning and budgeting are mostly allocated to the maintenance of the governmental organizations and their personnel and rarely are there any policies demanding the authorities to do operational planning and the government seems to be weak to seriously orient the cultural issues. The fourth issue is the lack of research on this issue. The execution of cultural policies is a complex issue and it is necessary to study and fathom this complexity. One of the main ignorance in the field of public policy-making in Iran is the lack of executive studies. It has been ignored that the execution of a policy and the execution topic is per se an independent subject to be studied (Ashtariyan, 2012, p 249).

The man force as the fifth issue is one of the executive bases of cultural policy. The man force must enjoy sufficient ability and specialty as well as believing in the

policy that is to execute. However, it seems that there is no expert identification of the scientists' forms and the cultural policies boil down to the passive execution of administrative instructions. The lack of or weakness in professional training for the man force working in the field of culture is great ignorance in the field of cultural policy in Iran. The parallel work and the repetition of the promotional actions are other challenges facing the execution of the cultural policy in Iran and the existence of multiple policy-making bodies in Iran that are involved in policy-making and the execution of the policies by these many institutions bring about confusion, lack of coordination, disorder, and some other problems.

Not accepting the cultural policy-making models used by other nations can be named as the last challenge facing policy-making in Iran while these administrative indicators are proposed and accepted by the thinkers, and they are now considered as the criteria used by the international community. Implementing the administrative standards in the field of culture make the execution of the cultural policies more successful. The employment of the international methods and models in the fields of engineering, medicine, etc faces fewer obstacles than in the fields of cultural policy-making and planning and it may indicate the psychology of fear.

#### **2.4.2. The weaknesses of cultural policy-making after the Islamic Revolution**

The cultural policy-making after the Islamic Revolution in Iran has suffered many insufficiencies and weaknesses because of its idealist nature and has faced many challenges that were mentioned in the previous section and some will be mentioned here.

- An extensive part of the cultural activities is done by the government and the activities in the private sector also heavily depend on the government. This means that the government is the axis of planning and execution. This can be seen in chapters 49 and 50 of the cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of

Iran. The dominant spirit of other principles reflects the support of the government. Fortunately, the intervening role of the government has changed in the fourfold development plans<sup>13</sup>, this is especially obvious in the fourth development plan.

- The cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on a very general definition of culture and cultural activities. The holistic view in this policy will lead to dispersion and intervention of the government in all aspects and affairs while there is commonly no need for governmental intervention in them.
- The lack of a clear-cut list of the priorities concerning the cultural issues and lack of any explanation and explication of some concepts and principles listed at the level of cultural issues of the Islamic Republic of Iran is another weakness of cultural policy-making in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Many centers and organizations that consider themselves related to the field of culture have commonly some written and unwritten rules and procedures, and these regulations are not in complete harmony with the cultural policies of the country and negate their actions mutually.
- Lack of relationships between planning in the cultural, the political, and social fields
- Lack of an exact system of evaluation and lack of determination of the necessary indicators and standards to evaluate the performance in the field of culture.

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<sup>13</sup> As it has been explicitly mentioned in the phrases of the above-mentioned law, the governments are not in charge of the cultural affairs like before, but it is responsible for preparing the ground and supporting the cultural and artistic activities and cooperating and supporting the non-governmental institutions in the field of cultural activities and it is responsible to discharge these duties to prepare the ground for the public participation in different cultural aspects.

## **2.5. Historical heritage and cultural policy: cultural identity and economic development**

Cultural policy-making may include any field of human life, social phenomena, and human achievements and may also devise and formulate some plans for them.

Some topics that can be addressed by the cultural policies and approaches are historical heritage, traditional rituals, and handicrafts and they are classified as cultural and historical heritage. Formulating and planning cultural policies in the field of cultural heritage considering the great potential of Iran in terms of historical and cultural richness is to achieve cultural and economic developments.

One of the concerns and challenges in the present age is cultural particularism used to counter the integration into the global culture (Azadarmaki, 2014, p 113). Cultural pluralism has been proposed as a result of the globalization process and changing of the world into a small communication village where it loans its main components from the homogenizing global culture and it intends to achieve some type of global cultural homogenization by overcoming the regional and national cultures. This is while cultural particularism has been proposed as a type of cultural resistance to the cultural homogenization current and an approach adopted by the local and national cultures (Azadarmaki, 2014, p 115). The cultural particularisms seek to create a particular form of cultural identity that prevents the disintegration and integration of the regional identity in the universal culture as well as creating a national unanimity and unity by emphasizing the native culture and its components. Considering the historical background of Iran and its powerful cultural heritage, this potential can change into an instrument to achieve a particular cultural identity at the national level and also achieve cultural development. To attain this goal, the relationship between cultural heritage and cultural policy-making at the macro level should be re-defined and noticed again. This should be put on the agenda by the relevant governmental



bodies and especially by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Iran.

Developing policies with cultural content pursuing the goal of using the historical and cultural heritage to achieve a type of national consensus and to establish a cultural identity are important steps towards cultural development. The communal nature of the cultural heritage as a historical achievement can act as a crucial reason for the formation of collective communal identity and include all marginal discourses. The reason is that the historical and cultural heritage, due to its relationship with the mythical archetype or the collective and communal unconscious of ethnicity, has a great capacity to create a national consensus, unity, and identity (Bourghanifarahani and Aghajani, 2016, p 5). Any type of cultural policy-making should emphasize this mythical and collective aspect of the cultural heritage and consider it as the starting point to develop cultural policies. Such policies should aim at the public and collective culture of the society through the executive arms, such as media, books, advertisements, etc, and prepare the ground for the formation of a collective symbiosis and collocations by building a collective identity where each citizen feels a common sense of belonging.

Another considerable goal of correct management in the field of cultural and historical heritage that can be provided for the country is to achieve sustainable economic development of tourism and handicrafts. Nowadays, concerning the changes in the services provided in the field of economy, the governments seek to use all their cultural, climatic, geographical, and historical capacities as some representations of the service sector to attract capital and create wealth (Hemmati, 2008, p 109). Tourism is among those facilities which have been developed considerably in today's world and many countries have managed to achieve sustainable or relatively sustainable economic development by developing the

tourism industry. The qualitative and quantitative vastness of cultural heritage, historical heritage, handicrafts, art and architectural styles, type of climate and ethnicity, historical and religious rituals, etc have the potential to change Iran into an important tourism pole in the region and also the world (Idem, p 111). Cultural policy-making in this field can achieve the development of some policies with cultural content by addressing these cultural potentials to maintain and mend the cultural heritage on the one hand, and on other hand, to formulate plans for promoting and making these potentials known to those who are interested in tourism both domestically and internationally. These policies should be able to lead the citizens to participate in taking care and preserving this heritage by being combined in the policies of cultural identity and making use of them through creating a sense of belonging and a common identity among the citizens to this cultural heritage.

Any type of cultural policy-making in the field of cultural heritage emphasizing the two goals of cultural identity and economic development should develop policies that cover both fields of the domestic and overseas. Also, these two goals should not be considered distinct goals, but symbiotic and interdependent, and some of the cultural policies should be formulated and designed considering both goals.

## **2.6.The study into upstream documents: The cultural heritage as viewed by the macro cultural policies**

There is no doubt that Iran has many attractions for those who are interested in historical, cultural, natural, and religious tourism in terms of cultural, architectural, and handicrafts heritage. Iran has added a greater number of the items considered as a heritage to UNESCO's World Heritage List than any other country in the Middle East and West of Asia, even Turkey. Despite so many attractions, the number of visiting international tourists and the quality of the tourist industry in Iran is dissatisfactory. We must study the upstream documents of the Islamic Republic of

Iran to find out the cause for this disproportional condition, and reveal the quality and quantity of the dominant attitude to cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism. Since the cultural policy-making at the macro level is formulated based on the same upstream documents, the critical study of the documents can identify the archetypes of cultural policy-making in the field of cultural heritage.

### **2.6.1. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

The constitution of the country is the main upstream document concerning the formulation and execution of the law and also the main criterion for policy-making. In the meanwhile, article 83 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran addresses cultural heritage. According to this article, governmental buildings and properties that are considered national heritage are not transferable except with the approval of the Islamic Consultative Assembly. This exception does not apply to rare and invaluable items (The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran). This article suggests that the cultural heritage has been addressed just in terms of legality and ownership of the cultural heritage rarely in terms of cultural and economic value. The lack of more profound attention to the cultural heritage in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran can bring about serious challenges for cultural policy-making. On the other hand, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the charter and the main basic document in the country as a major content that determines the mechanisms and method of running the country has not mentioned anything about tourism, and the relevant concepts (Iran and world tourism and so on) and institutional structure. Though the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran state generalities and many of the issues of the society like tourism have not been mentioned in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the extraordinary capacity of Iran's tourism and the economic and cultural share of this industry in the

world entails mentioning the institutional structure and its importance in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Wisi, 2017, p 101).

### **2.6.2. The 1404 Vision Document**

The 1404 Vision Document is the most important document connected with Iran's development over the last decade which other laws are passed based on that has not mentioned cultural heritage, tourism, and the relevant concepts. It should be noted that many economic, social, political, and cultural issues have not been mentioned in this document, while only the macro goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran that should be realized by 2025 have been mentioned. However, the keyword *vision document* is Iran is a developed country enjoying the first economic, scientific and technological status in the region with the Islamic and revolutionary identity, and it is to be inspiring in the world of Islam while interacting constructively and effectively in the international relations. Thus, the proposition that the development of the tourism industry is one of the main economic and cultural fields can be inferred (Idem, p 101).

Ignoring one of the main potentials of the country an important document that can help build a powerful national cultural identity in the world and turn a high economic profit needs a thorough examination because the more upstream documents ignore an important potential in the country, and eliminate it from the list of important priorities of planning, the more difficult is to make policies and formulate a plan to use these potentials.

### **2.6.3. Comprehensive Scientific Map of Iran**

The Comprehensive Scientific Map of Iran is another important upstream document that includes the general strategies, plans, and visions about the scientific development of the country in the future horizons. It has been mentioned in the Comprehensive Scientific Map of Iran that since making sure of the growth and

advancement in some priorities requires attention, guidance and support provided at macro administrative levels, and in some others, the growth and development will be achieved by the support provided by the middle management and decentralized allocation of resources, the priorities have been classified at three levels, namely A, B, and C. This classification is based on the method and amount of allocation of resources including financial and human resources and attention to the managers and authorities (Comprehensive Scientific Map of Iran, 2013, p 11). In this strategic document where the sciences, techniques and research fields, and academic disciplines have been prioritized at three levels according to which the budget is to be allocated, no academic discipline relating to tourism, cultural heritage, such as Geography, Tourism Management, Hotel Management, Ecotourism, Tourism Marketing, etc has been mentioned. Thus, it seems that the skill, training, learning, research, studies, etc in the field of cultural heritage and tourism are not given priority in the Comprehensive Scientific Map of Iran.

Ignoring the sciences relating to cultural heritage and tourism may be more damaging than any other type of ignorance. The lack of attention to cultural heritage and tourism in the document that is the most cultural upstream document in the country makes it difficult to move towards cultural policy-making in the field of cultural heritage. On the other hand, in today's data-based and knowledge-based world, the development in any human, historical and social field entails having a scientific, meticulous, and knowledge-based perspective on the part of the graduates in any given field of study. This is while the inattention to the academic knowledge in the field of cultural heritage and the elimination of the academic knowledge from the planning priorities prevents the creation of a capable and motivated generation of graduates in these fields.

#### **2.6.4. Five-year development plans**

The five-year plans of economic, social, and cultural development are another important upstream document. These plans have been designed as some strategies to facilitate development in the coming five-year horizon. In the first development plan, the third clause of the section on policies mentions the enhancement and development of Iran and world tourism to exchange experience, knowledge and to make the legacy of Islamic civilization and culture and Iran known to the world (the section on policies, article 3). There is no specific mention of tourism and relevant issues in the second plan. There are a greater number of subjects mentioned in tourism in the third plan concerning the two previous plans. It has been mentioned in article 164 of the third plan that the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran must make some regulations to purchase foreign exchange from the tourists in entry ports and to sell foreign exchange to the tourists in departure ports in the period specified to execute this plan. In addition, it has been mentioned in article 166 that in the cities with valuable historical texture, some appropriate administrative mechanisms should be established in the municipalities to execute the affairs relating to the preservation of the historical texture and the city council should provide the relevant manager with a certain amount of municipal revenue (Third Development Plan Law, articles 164-166). In the fourth development plan, a greater number of provisions have been mentioned on cultural heritage and tourism the most important of which is the creation and development of the research-specialized museums that are affiliated with the executive bodies, creation, and equipment of the bases of cultural heritage in the important historical heritage, creating the revival and utilization fund for the historical and cultural building and sites in the country, identification and support of the cultural heritage in the field of culture of Iran in the neighboring countries and creation of foundations to preserve tribes in the counties and provinces of Iran, such as the tourist villages, museums, and exhibitions (Fourth Development Plan Law, article 114).

According to the Fifth five-year development plan law of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the government is bound to provide the necessary infrastructures for the pilgrims visiting Mashhad, Qom, and Shiraz with the help of the municipalities, and to develop the cultural activities and pilgrimage services provided to the pilgrims in the pilgrimage proles of Iran. Also, it has been mentioned in this document that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts is allowed to create a center for supervising dwellings, travel and tour agencies, financing Holy-Defense and Martyrs' museums, and constructing a center for preserving the nomadic and rural heritage and culture (Fifth Development Plan Law, articles 11-12).

Relatively more desirable attention has been paid to cultural heritage and tourism in the sixth development plan law, and a greater number of articles has been allocated to cultural heritage and tourism than the previous plans, and articles 97, 98, 99, and 100 are related to the activities in the field of the tourism industry. These articles are as follows: (Sixth development plan law).

Article 97- The government is bound to take the necessary actions to deepen the values, beliefs, and Islamic identity-based culture, to promulgate the life conduct and tradition of Ahl al-Bayt <sup>14</sup>(PBUT), make optimal use of the moral capacity of the pilgrimage sites in some holy cities including Holy Mashhad, Qom, Shiraz and to the facilities required to hold the annual ceremony of Arbaeen <sup>15</sup>Walkup to the end of the execution of the planned law.

Article 98- Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts is bound to take the required actions to preserve the cultural heritage in cooperation and coordination

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<sup>14</sup> In Shia (a branch of Islam), Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) are the center and interpreter of Quran and tradition. The Shiites believe that Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT) are the real successors of the prophet of Islam

<sup>15</sup> Arbaeen literally means "fortieth" in Arabic and is used as a name for the day which marks the fortieth day from the date of the Tragedy of Karbala, according to Islam. This day falls on 20th Safar on the Islamic calendar. The shrines of the martyrs of Karbala are situated in the same city in Iraq. This ceremony which is held by millions of people is one of the most powerful symbols of unity among the Shiites across the globe.

with other relevant executive institutions to identify, document, preserve, restore, introduce the cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible), natural heritage, create global cities of handicrafts, revive the traditional arts are on the decline in Iranian culture and civilization and add to the list of world heritage according to the annual budget.

Article 99- Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation in cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts is bound to take action to provide and implement the renewal and rehabilitation plan for at least 300 villages with the texture enjoying the historical and cultural value, and also for the villages attracting tourists by the financing provided by the credit allocation of capital assets possession until the end of the execution of the planned law in the annual budget to be preserved, maintained, and utilized in the framework of the contents of this article.

**Article 100 -**

- A- Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts is bound to provide the strategic document of tourism development in the framework of the relevant laws with the approach to make maximum use of the private sector to approve the cabinet until the end of the first year of executing the plan law.
- B- Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in cooperation with the same organization is bound to provide the plan for organizing tourism in the forests of north and northwest of the country and Zagros, northern and northern coasts giving priority to Makran Coasts according to the relevant laws until the end of the first year of execution of the plan law to be approved by the cabinet.
- C- The government is bound to do the make necessary arrangements and take the required legal actions for integrated and comprehensive management of the



Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts until the end of the first year of the execution of the plan law.

D- Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts is bound to credit all of the allocated revenue and the popular help obtained from the historical sites and spaces and museums to the account of the treasury. All obtained cash and also the share of the governmental help allocated to these sites are provided to the Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts as the annual budget to run, develop and restore these sites.

E- Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts can delegate some of its incumbency and executive tasks to the legally established professional and expert organizations operating in the field of tourism.

F- The government is bound to give priority to the provision of gas to the villages visited by tourists.

The approval of the strategic document of tourism development and running the historical sites by the board of trustees were put on the agenda along with the execution of the sixth development plan law and the activities relating to the activities of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. This is a report made by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization of Iran in 2017 indicating the development of the activities and making different deputies of the Ministry boom to realize the goals set by the vision document. In this report, interacting with the private and governmental institutions, building identity and branding in the field of handicrafts, creating non-governmental organizations are considered as the strengths of the activities performed so far. However, not using the scientific methods, providing a coherent and integrated approach, having well-formulated strategic plans, and lack of cooperation among the executive bodies including the weaknesses of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization of Iran have been stated (Inanlou, 2019). A brief look at the

five-year development plans shows that the attention to cultural heritage and tourism has been increased and a greater emphasis has been placed on these capitals from the first development plan to the sixth development plan. This issue has accumulated especially in the sixth development plan. It is noted that in the articles allocated to cultural heritage and tourism, the cultural heritage in the Islamic period has been addressed more than the ancient heritage we can find a considerable asymmetry in the attention to these two historical periods. Some textual indications and signs like the order of the adjectives “Islamic and Iranian” used for the cultural heritage always give priority to the first adjective and the emphasis given to the religious, pilgrimage, and ritual concerning the emphasis on the ancient and historical sites. Speaking of the latter, it is usually more ambiguous and general which indicates that the cultural heritage of Islamic civilization has been more emphasized. This is while achieving cultural and economic sustainable development in the field of cultural heritage and tourism requires comprehensive attention and consideration of all possible potentials.

#### **2.6.5. Law on permanent rules of Iran’s development plans.**

The law on permanent rules of Iran’s development plans is another notable upstream document that has formulated and designed some rules and articles as the archetype and guide for the development-oriented plans in the country in different social, cultural, and economic fields. In act 1395 of this law, cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism have been mentioned in articles 23 and 72. It has been mentioned in article 23 of this law that imposing any tax or toll on the exportation of the permitted and non-subsidized goods and preventing the exportation of any goods to regulate the domestic market is forbidden and the exportation of all goods and services is officially permitted. The antique objects and cultural heritage identified by Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization of Iran have been considered as

exceptions in this article. It has been mentioned in article 72 of this law that considering the importance and necessity of restoring the historical and cultural buildings and renovation of the valuable textures of the country, all executive institutions are authorized to utilize the historical and cultural constructions and sites added to the list of national heritage (except for the national exquisite objects) and they keep is assigned to the private and cooperative sectors by determining a user that is appointed by Cultural Heritage, Organization of Handicrafts and Tourism in the framework of rules and regulation (Law on Permanent Rules of Iran's Development Plans, 2013).

In this law, broad attention is paid to the problem of cultural heritage. In article 23, only the fact that the antique objects are an exception to the exportation has been proposed. In article 72, the possibility of a delegation of the responsibility for restoration, maintenance, and preservation of historical heritage to the private sector and the legality of this possibility has been posed while emphasizing the importance of renovation, maintenance, and preservation of the historical heritage. However, the delegation of this important authority to the private sector may cause some problems or even it can be a challenging subject that the private sector has not proven to be reliable for not preparing a proper ground for the privatization and the very limited number of parent specialized companies and institutions in a particular field. In such conditions, it does not seem rational that the delegation of the responsibility for maintaining and preserving the cultural heritage to the weak private sector whose main goal is to maximize profit

#### **2.6.6. General policies announced by the supreme leader in the Sixth Development Plan**

In the announcement issued by the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran where the general policies of the sixth development plan have been included which

is also considered as the model that is to be followed in the five-year development plan, two paragraphs have addressed cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts. In paragraph 50 of the announcement, it has been mentioned that the sustainable development of Iran tourism that the foreign tourists visiting Iran will be increased by five times until the end of the sixth development plan. Also, paragraph 51 of this announcement demands supporting handicrafts and preserving the cultural heritage of Iran (General policies announced by the supreme leader in the sixth plan of development).

Allocation of 2 paragraphs of this 80-paragraph announcement to cultural heritage and tourism can be highly important and it can inspire micro policy-making in this field. The considerable point is that these two paragraphs place the greatest emphasis on the economic aspect of cultural heritage and the cultural aspects required to shape a national identity have not been largely ignored. Also, domestic tourists have been addressed much more than foreign tourists because of the emphasis on internal development and economic independence (resistive economy).

## **2.7. Institutions responsible for culture in the Islamic Republic of Iran: policy-making and execution**

There are plenty of cultural institutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran that are responsible for formulating, describing, and executing cultural policies. A large number of institutions, bodies, and organizations are in direct contact with cultural issues in Iran and most of them are dealing with the cultural issues related to Islam and the Islamic Revolution. The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution is directed by the president and is responsible for required supervising and coordinating to execution of the cultural policies. According to article 50, the institutions and organizations executing the cultural policies are as follows:

Ministries of Culture and Islamic Guidance (and affiliate organizations including the organizations of Haj and Pilgrimage, Devotion and Charity, Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Islamic Culture and Relations, a public body of board of trustees' secretary of public libraries in Iran and publishing organization), cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism, education, culture, and higher education, health and medical education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs are all, in particular, the bodies executing cultural policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, in addition to the above-mentioned items, other governmental organizations independent of the ministries that participate in the execution of the cultural policies are the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and Physical Education Organization, prayers promulgation headquarters, National Youth Organization, The National Library of Iran (NLI), Headquarters of Enjoining the Right and Forbidding the Wrong, Islamic Propagation Center of Howzah Qom Branch, Coordination Council for Islamic Propagation, institute for compilation and publication of the works of Imam Khomeini, the library of Ayatollah Mar'ashi Najafi, the supreme council of seminary, Organization of Islamic Propagation, International Center for Islamic Studies and Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.

Ahmad Ganji in a study on the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution in 2004 has divided the cultural institutions in Iran into three types:

- The culture-oriented bodies with the public audience (Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, Tourism; Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting; Islamic Propagation Organization of Howzah, Qom Branch; Cultural and Art Organization of Tehran)
- The culture-based institutions with a special target audience (Howzeh-ye Honari, Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, Student Organization, Culture, and Art Center and Mosques)

- Institutions doing cultural tasks while having no cultural and artistic mission are divided into (the Ministry of Education, Higher Education) (Gorji).

The classification based on the performance of organizations and bodies is as follows:

- Policy-making organizations and bodies
- Executing organizations and bodies
- Supervising organizations and bodies

However, it seems that because of the lack of transparency of the rules and regulations on the duties and authorities of the cultural organizations and bodies in Iran, the above-mentioned divisions cannot be considered as exact and comprehensive divisions.

In the other method, only the institutions that are recognized as the cultural institution in the annual budget plan and receive governmental help can be considered cultural where 44 institutions have been named (Salehiamiri, 2016, p 202). These 44 governmental and quasi-governmental institutions have been involved in the field of culture in different and use governmental finance. As previously mentioned, two ministries, 7 organizations, and a large number of bodies and governmental and quasi-governmental centers constitute the cultural institutions in the country of which 23 institutions are governmental and the rest of them are quasi-governmental. However, the governmental cultural centers are directly run by the body supervised by the office of the supreme leader and an affiliate organization.

The main policy-making institutions and organizations executing the policies can be mentioned as follows (Salehiamiri, 2016):

### **3.7.1. Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution**

The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution directed by the president is responsible for supervising and coordinating the cultural policies. The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution has held about 20 sessions and issued 53 acts in the period from August 2005 to August 2007. Among the 53 acts, 18 acts are related to the election or approval of the cultural representatives in different institutions, 10 acts are related to the reform of, change in, an amendment to the previous acts where 5 acts address the establishment of new cultural foundations and bodies and the rest of acts that are related to cultural policy-making except in one or two acts, are completely in the field of micro cultural policy-making. This is the case while the duties assigned to the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution are mainly concerned with the macro policy-making in the country, not the micro policy-making.

### **3.7.2. Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance**

On October 15th, 1949 according to the act approved by the Supreme Council of Writing and Fine Arts, the Department of Fine Arts was established in the Ministry of Culture. In December 1964, according to the act approved by Iran's parliament, the Ministry of Culture and Art was established. On the other hand, on July 2nd, 1953, the Department General of Publication and Propagating was established, and according to the act passed by Iran's parliament on March 18th, 1964, the department general was named the Ministry of Intelligence. Then the Ministry of Intelligence and Tourism was established by combining the Organization of Attracting Tourists with the Ministry of Intelligence in June 1974. Finally, the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Cultural Heritage was established after the Islamic Revolution by combining the Ministry of Culture and Art with the Ministry of Intelligence and Tourism. The main goal of this ministry is to develop the ethical virtues according to the belief in God and piety, cultural independence and security of the society

against the cultural influence of foreign countries, promotion of public awareness of different issues, propagation of Islamic culture, and art, the awareness of the world about the fundamentals and goals of the Islamic Revolution, development of cultural relations with nations and tribes specially the Muslims unprivileged and Muslims across the globe, preparation of the grounds for the unity among the Muslims.

Also, the organizations affiliated with this ministry are Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Devotion and Charity organization, Iran and World Tourism Organization, National heritage and Honors Association, Publishing Organization of Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization and Organization of Cultural Heritage. The main duties of this ministry are:

- Making the tenets and goals of the Islamic Revolution known to the world using audiovisual and artistic means and facilities.
- Studying and researching the advertisement of the global media.
- Signing contracts on cultural, artistic, cinematic, touring, news, and press exchanges and participating in the sessions held by the regional and international organizations on the relationship with them in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while observing all basic rules.
- Cooperating with the Islamic and cultural centers of other countries on cultural and economic issues
- Managing the affairs of Hajj, charity, and devotion
- Collecting the news on the paper's report and the pictures of Iran and other countries around the world and distributing them among the mass media of the country



- Developing and utilizing Iran and world tourism installations of any kind, and also interacting with the Iranian and foreign tourists and providing them with the required necessities for them to make domestic and foreign trips
- Creating, developing, equipping, and managing the public libraries
- Planning for creation, reform, and completion of the tourism installations through direct investment and granting loans to the private sectors or cooperating with them
- Supervising the cultural, artistic, and promotional activities of the religious minorities recognized in the constitution
- Researching the effects of mass media and assessing the extent of impacts of these media
- Preparing the grounds for the development of the culture of the Islamic Revolution and promulgation of Farsi in different countries in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Science, Research and Technology
- Formulating the general cultural, artistic, and cinematic policies of the country

### **2.7.3. Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism**

The tourism industry in Iran has officially existed since half a century ago to make Iran's honors and civilization known and the Office of Foreign Tourists and Promotion was established in 1935 in the Ministry of Interior to publish journals and tour guide booklets in Iran. After September 1941, the office was named Supreme Council of Tourism which was supervised by the Ministry of Interior, and finally, the cabinet approved the name Tourist Attraction Organization in 1963, and the organization officially began operation.

After the Islamic Revolution and according to the act passed by the Supreme Administrative Council, all duties and missions of the deputy of tourism and

pilgrimage affairs in the Ministry of Guidance were delegated to the Organization of Iran and World Tourism to continue the relevant tasks as the new organization. On January 30th, 1986, and owing to the law, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage was established. According to the law, the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education was authorized to establish the Organization of Cultural Heritage as an organization affiliating with it by combining 11 dispersed units of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance<sup>16</sup> and the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education<sup>17</sup>. This law was passed on January 30th, 1986 in Iran's Parliament and it was then approved by the Council of Guardians.

Organization of Cultural Heritage: This organization was officially granted to the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education. The Supreme Administrative Council in a session held on April 7th, 1993, Iran's Organization of Cultural Heritage was separated from the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education and it joined the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance at the suggestion of the Organization of Administrative and Employment Affairs to coordinate and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization of Cultural Heritage and enhance concentration on managing cultural institutions. According to paragraph 3 of the above-mentioned act, all authorities and responsibilities of the minister and Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance concerning the executive duties of the Organization of Cultural Heritage are transferred to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

In the open session of Iran's parliament held on January 13th, 2004, the Organization of Cultural Heritage and the Organization of Iran and World Tourism were separated

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of Counties, Department General of Museums, Department General of Historic Sites, Department General of Palaces)

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Culture and Higher Education (Department General of Traditional Arts, the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research (ICAR), Iranian Anthropological Research Center (ARC), Museum of Ancient Iran, Office of Historical heritage, National Organization of Protection of Ancient Heritage)

from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Organization of Cultural Heritage and Tourism was established by combining those two organizations, and the new organization started its operation having full authority while being supervised by the president.

In 2004, the law on the establishment of Handicrafts Organization was passed by Iran's parliament, and finally, it joined the organization as one of the deputies of the Organization of Cultural Heritage in 2006 after many transformations. Handicrafts are an important part of the cultural heritage of each country. This issue is especially important in some of the countries enjoying a long ancient civilization like Iran. The handicrafts indicate a particular set of arts whose feature is the production using the traditional and old methods. These arts are like a prism representing the history, geography, and climate of a particular region (Omidi and Omidi, 2014, p 60). Handicrafts are to a large extent based on representation just like other arts. However, the representation is mainly used here in the sense of representing the historical identities and geographic climates. The climatic diversity in Iran is so extensive that the mountainous, foothill, desert, plain, etc. climates have existed alongside each other. Each one of these geographic climates has experienced the formation of some particular types of handicrafts like Iranian carpet, Jajim (Persian handwoven rugs), wick, pottery, wood carving, etc.

Iranian handicrafts have always attracted the attention of foreign tourists, and the findings indicate that whenever there is proper planning to introduce and promote these heritage items, these industries have achieved a desirable creation of wealth (Shojanouri, 2014, p 72). Also, the correct management and planning in making these heritage items known at the international level can present a considerable part of the Iranian cultural identity to the world. On August 1<sup>st</sup> 2019, the Council of Guardians agreed with the bill proposed to establish the Ministry of Cultural

Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism. However, the Council of Guardians had disagreed twice with the establishment of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage for some reason. The members of Iran's parliament reformed the bill demanding the establishment of these ministries and sent it to the Council of Guardians and the executive process of the establishment of the Ministry of Culture, Handicrafts, and Tourism started upon the agreement of the Council of Guardians.

Macro goals:

- Introducing the culture and rich civilization and cultural, historical, and natural capacities of the country and making use of its advantages and capacities to stabilize and promote the position of Iran's civilization in the world
- Developing an integrated managerial and legal system that is efficient and reliant on the participation of the beneficiaries in the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), nature, handicrafts, and tourism that is reliant on the ethical principles, Islamic-national values and aligning with the scientific, technical criteria and the geographic, historical and cultural requirements of the country
- Enhancing and deepening the relationship between the society and the natural and cultural assets and legacies, and promoting public awareness to increase the social capital in the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), nature, handicrafts, and tourism
- Developing the capacities and promotion of the existing capacities in the fields of cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible), nature, traditional art and knowledge, native technology, handicrafts, and tourism
- Creating an efficient, competitive, stable, balanced economic system and growing fast and continuously based on the relative cultural advantages of the

country in cooperation with the domestic and foreign non-governmental and private sectors

- Identifying, doing research, documenting, introducing, educating and promulgating, preserving, reviving, and utilizing (tangible and intangible) cultural heritage, nature, traditional arts, and handicrafts wisely
- Making national attempts and enhancing the sense of public responsibility and attracting the public participation in supporting, preserving, reviving, and utilizing the cultural heritage, nature, cultural diversity, diversity of visions, and biodiversity of the country wisely
- Achieving the true position of the country as one of the global tourism poles through developing national tourism quantitatively and qualitatively, providing product variety aligning the market, promoting the quality and standardizing tourist services, and facilitating trips
- Interacting purposively and constructively at the international level with an emphasis on the Islamic countries in the cultural heritage, nature, handicrafts, and tourism sectors
- Developing a comprehensive and efficient handicrafts production and distribution system at the national and international levels

#### **2.7.4. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting**

In the preamble to Iran's constitution, approved in the referendum held in December 1979, it has been mentioned about the role and position of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting that the mass media (Radio-TV) must provide Islamic services to advance and complete the goals of the Islamic Revolution, and make use of different healthy thoughts and seriously avoid promoting the destructive and anti-revolutionary qualities.

According to article 174 of Iran's constitution, approved in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting is run by the triple powers as a supervisory council. However, based on the revision of the constitution in 1989, the appointment and removal of the director of this organization are bestowed upon the supreme leader and a council consisting of the representatives of the president, chief justice of Iran, and Speaker of the Parliament of Iran.

Some of the main goals of this organization are:

**Article 9-** The main goal of the organization as a public university is to propagate Islamic culture, create the appropriate environment to educate and spiritually purify humans and develop ethical virtues, speed up the evolutionary movement of the Islamic Revolution across the world. This goal is achieved in the framework of the guiding, educational, news, and recreational plans.

**Article 11-** The organization must take action to develop international exchanges and communications through producing useful radio and TV programs and broadcasting them globally while observing Islamic principles.

The general policy and principle of the programs produced by the organization are:

**Article 1-** Dominance of Islam overall programs and avoidance of broadcasting programs that conflict with the Islamic criteria.

**Article 2-** Dominance of revolution's spirit and constitution overall programs thereby promoting the motto, Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic.

**Article 5-** The TV should act as a public university to develop awareness and growth in the society in different ideological, political, social, cultural, economic, and military fields.

**Article 7-** Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting belongs to the entire nation and it should reflect the life and conditions of all ethnicities living in the country. It is axiomatic that the main emphasis should be on the religious majority (Muslims), the economic majority (the suppressed), and the majority in terms of age (children and teenagers).

**Article 10-** The organization is bound to convey its message using indirect statements in more interesting forms like the artistic means that fit the conditions and spirits of different social classes to impart its message to the target audience's minds and feelings.

**Article 27-** Trying to substitute the value system of Islam for the eastern and western values and to fight the consequences and impacts remaining from the Pahlavi period.

**Article 28-** Trying to speed up the cultural revolution and to return to the Islamic Identity of the country.

**Article 52-** Making people aware of the satanic plans of the global colonizers and their domestic agents trying to undermine or deviate the Islamic Revolution

### **2.7.5. Islamic Development Organization**

Considering the wider range of promotional activities and the necessity of paying attention to its cultural and religious components and the development of promotional activities across the country, the Islamic Development Organization was established in 1981 by order of the founder of the Islamic Revolution.

Accordingly, at first, some initial goals were determined as follows:

1- Clarifying and explaining the blind and unknown points for the noble Iranians and world Muslims

2- Showing people especially young people the right way to fight against the enemies of Islam<sup>18</sup>

According to the order issued by the supreme leader in 2001, the main goal of the Islamic Development Organization is to present all brilliant ideas of Islam as required in any aspect to the incisive minds of the public, especially those of the young.

The general goals of this organization are:

- Implementing the brilliant ideas of Islam, enhancing the divine thralldom spirits and promulgating Islamic ethics among people, especially among the young people
- Defending the principles of Islam, the holy system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and identifying the cultural and promotional conspiracies of the foreign countries
- Developing the religious aspects of People's lives and national traditions in Iran both quantitatively and qualitatively

The duties and missions of the organization are:

- Making policies, planning, guiding, organizing, supporting, and supervising the religious propagation
- Trying to revive and propagate the religious and cultural teachings of Shia history in any possible way with an emphasis on the unity of all Islamic denominations

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<sup>18</sup> Thoughts of the Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran



- Conducting research and studying the enemies' negative and destructive publicity and cultural invasion
- Preparing and providing cultural and artistic Islamic products and heritage

Some executive priorities of the organization are:

- Organizing Iran's missionaries and effectively using their ability to enhance the religious beliefs of the society
- Optimizing the traditional methods of publicity and using modern technology
- Setting the mosques in the cities and villages as the bases in the cultural and promotional activities and making proper use of the active elements in the mosques

### **2.7.6. Endowment and Charity Organization**

This organization is responsible for handling the affairs of public donations without any owners or the specific donations and the Islamic sites and the religious vows etc. and any other property that is allocated as anything but the donation for the public utility affairs and the charity institutions and associations that are assigned to this organization by the government and other competent authorities, according to the relevant laws.

The bases of culture: Some relevant activities are the development of the civil construction, renovation, and revival of the endowments and holy Islamic sites to make better use of them and to develop the plans to help publish and promote the Islamic teachings and Quranic sciences.

### **3.7.7. Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research**

Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research were established by order of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran on June 13th, 1980 to establish the cultural revolution headquarters. These headquarters established the Academic Center for

Education, Culture, and Research as a revolutionary body raised from the cultural revolution to realize the goals of the Cultural Revolution. The charter of this body was revised on August 2nd, 1986 and it was approved after removing the common duties of administrative management of the university and emphasizing the cultural and research activities to make the university abide by the Islamic rules. Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research is a public and non-governmental body that is supervised by the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution whose director is appointed as the authority holding the highest executive position of this body.

The general goals of the Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research are:

- Developing the cultural affairs throughout the society through the cooperation between Howzeh and universities and other cultural authorities and bodies, especially aiming at the young generation

General duties of the Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research are:

- Promoting and propagating Islamic culture and art, cultural and educational planning, preparing the young generation intellectually and ideologically and especially the high school and university students to counter westernization and deviation from the framework of the cultural policies of the country.
- Creating appropriate organizations to write, translate, and publish books, journals, research results, and scientific and cultural journals and producing teaching aids.

### **2.7.8. Islamic Culture and Relations Organization**

About 12 different organizations and bodies were involved in the cultural activities performed out of Iran until 1995, and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization was officially established to perform the promotional affairs out of the country as a single organization at the end of 1995 after going through different legal processes

and receiving supreme leader's confirmation of their charter, and adequate finance and budget were provided to this organization in early 1996 such that it was determined that the cultural sectors of Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly, and also the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought with all their financial capability, personnel and equipment were allocated to this organization.

### **Goals of the Islamic Development and Cultural Organization:**

- Developing and enhancing the cultural relations with different nations and ethnicities especially the Muslim countries to exchange cultural issues and present Islamic culture and civilization correctly
- Regulating and enhancing the cultural relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with other countries and cultural organizations throughout the world
- Preparing the ground for unity among Muslims based on axiomatic principles of Islam
- Presenting and introducing Ahl al-Bayt's school of thought in terms of belief and ethics
- Explaining the moral, intellectual and social transformations resulting from the Islamic Revolution in Iran
- Enhancing and deepening the grounds for the discussions with communities and scholars of the divine religions

### **The duties of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization are:**

- Making policies and coordinating all cultural and promotional activities in foreign countries
- Supervising the good performance of the agreements and cultural, artistic, and promotional plans in cooperation with foreign countries

- Studying and investigating to identify the desirable method of introducing the sciences and teachings of Islamic and Iranian culture and civilization
- Preparing the grounds and coordinating to sign agreements and contracts required for the cultural, scientific, educational, artistic, cinematic, world tourism, news, sports, and relief exchanges
- Developing and managing all Iran's cultural representatives and Iran's affiliated Islamic and cultural centers in foreign countries
- Developing and propagating Persian language and literature and bolstering academic studies of Persian language and Iranian studies
- Writing, translating, publishing appropriate books and journals to introduce Islamic and Iranian teachings, culture, art, and civilization and exchanging cultural issues with other countries

#### **2.7.9. Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly**

The general goal of this organization is to identify and collect the required statistics and information on the legal, political, social, and cultural conditions of Shiites.

#### **2.7.10. The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought**

The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought has been established to develop familiarity and understanding among Islamic scholars and thinkers across the globe in the economy, religious jurisprudence, and social and political affairs, and also coordinating and establishing a single front based on the axiomatic Islamic principles against the foreign conspiracies.

#### **2.7.11. Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)**

In September 1934, a department was established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs named Pars News Agency to collect the news in the country and provide it to the press and people. In 1975, Pars News agency turned into an independent governmental company and continued to operate with a particular charter known as

the then Ministry of Intelligence and Tourism. Pars News agency changed its name to the Islamic Republic on December 29th,1981 upon the approval of Iran's parliament.

This organization operates as a governmental company independent of the organizational groups affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. At present, the Islamic Republic News Agency is collecting and preparing news using more than fifty representative offices in Iran and thirty representative offices in some of the most important cities around the world.

**The centers managed by Islamic Republic News Agency are:**

- Organizational bodies of IRNA
- The newspapers: Iran, Iran Varzeshi, Iran Sal, Iran-e-Sepid, Iran Daily, Al-Vefagh, Iran Azin
- Publication of Iran Institute

**2.7.12. National Library of Iran**

The main core of the National Library of Iran was founded in Darolfonoon School in 1961 which had been constructed in 1937 in a new building located in the library of the Museum of Ancient Iran. According to the charter of this library that was approved in 1990, the national library is considered an educational (scientific), research, and service-providing institute that is directly supervised by the president, and it is located in Tehran.

**The main goals of this institution are:**

- Collecting, preserving, and propagating all documents and works published in the country

- Collecting, preserving and propagating the credible resources and works that have been composed out of Iran in some way about Iran or one of the languages used in Iran
- Helping to develop and advance the libraries in Iran through doing fundamental research into the library and information science, participating in the national and international planning of library science, and training man force

**The main duties of the body are as follows:**

- Collecting national journals and works
- Collecting foreign journals of national heritage
- Publishing national book studies, establishing a national center for book studies and book information, publishing booklists
- Holding exhibitions

**2.7.13. The Coordination Council for Islamic Propagation**

This council was formed at the suggestion of some outstanding cultural and religious figures and upon the agreement of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran on August 3rd, 1980. The council operates under the supervision of the representative of the supreme leader and in cooperation with the Islamic Republic Institution and different institutions that are mainly involved in the promotional, communicative, cultural, and informative fields where they carry out their missions and duties.

The Coordination Council for Islamic Propagation has been put in the list of the public non-governmental institutions and according to the circulation of the then president in 1990, it is responsible for planning, coordinating, making policies, supervising and executing the official ceremonies and public relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

## **2.8 Discussion and conclusion of the second chapter**

Iran has a long historical background involving a very extensive civilization and culture. This has made Iran enjoy a great potential of cultural heritage like the historical heritage and sites, architectural styles, handicrafts, etiquette and traditions, different ethnicities and languages, etc. Iran's history is generally divided into two periods, that is, the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic eras. Each one of these two historical periods has had a great and profound effect on Iran's culture through its unique architecture, art, history, and culture.

Making use of the great potential of Iran's cultural heritage can be addressed in two different fields: shaping a cultural and national identity and achieving sustainable economic development. Achieving these two goals requires planning, making policies, and managing competently the cultural heritage resources and potentials of the country. It really seems necessary to move towards a carefully planned cultural policy-making as well as an appropriate and exact general policy-making. This fact that cultural heritage is a cultural subject, and the appropriate utilization of this heritage requires a profound culture-building that must address the mass of people in the society as well as the people involved in government. Therefore, moving towards developing policies with relevant special cultural content must be strongly emphasized. Such a policy-making should emphasize on the creation of a public and national will to preserve, maintain, restore, and utilize the cultural heritage.

The present study aims at investigating the status of cultural heritage and in particular the ancient heritage of the ancient Achaemenid Empire and cultural macro policies. To achieve this goal, the upstream documents of the country like the constitution, 1404 vision document, five-year development plans, and other important upstream documents were studied and reviewed using the documentary method. The main goal of this study was to determine the quality and quantity of

addressing the cultural heritage by the upstream texts. Since the upstream documents take into consideration the macro policies of the country in different fields, we cannot naturally expect different issues and subjects to be addressed and examined in detail. However, the same texts are the model and archetype followed in making policies in different fields, and the greater emphasis placed on a subject by the upstream texts, the given subject stands greater chance of being subject to policy-making.

The study of the documents has produced some notable results. The results showed that there is increasing attention to cultural heritage from the beginning of the Islamic Revolution. The extent to which important documents from the main upstream document of the Islamic Republic of Iran, that is the constitution, to the recently published texts, have addressed the cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism indicates a positive and upward trend and the number of articles and notes addressing this subject has continuously increased. For example, the five-year development plans can be pointed out as an example. The trend has increased since the introduction of the second development plan where there is no mention of cultural heritage, to the sixth development plan that the amount of the attention to cultural heritage in the recent plan has reached its peak concerning the articles and paragraphs addressing this subject. It should be acknowledged that there is no exclusively upward trend in addressing cultural heritage, but this trend has faced some ups and downs. The reason for these ups and downs can be traced back to the differences in the tastes and attitudes of different administrations that usually, the reformist administrations have paid more attention to cultural heritage.

Considering the quality of addressing the cultural heritage, since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution until now, the quality and depth of articles and paragraphs on cultural heritage has raised. However, the growth cannot be considered linear and



its ups and downs should be noted. A notable issue is the different dominant attitudes towards Iran's cultural heritage in the two periods, Iran's ancient period and the Islamic period. A more exact study of the upstream documents shows that there has been an ever-increasing ambiguity and lack of transparency about the historical heritage and sites of ancient Iran while most of the paragraphs and articles on cultural heritage in the upstream texts point out the heritage of the Islamic period like the pilgrimage and religious sites. The reason for addressing this issue is the ideological basics of the Islamic Republic of Iran whose main emphasis is on some items, such as being Islamist, propagation of Shia, political opposition to monarchy, etc.

Considering the two above-mentioned goals of making policies on cultural heritage, that is, national and cultural identity-building, both goals have been rarely emphasized exactly and scientifically despite the general mention of them. As for the cultural goal, there has been a greater emphasis on the cultural use of the historical heritage than on national identity-building using these capacities. The cultural use has emphasized the religious sites and buildings, holy objects, holy tombs, etc. to satisfy the domestic Muslim tourists while the heritage of the Islamic civilization of Iran must be introduced internationally and be emphasized as a part of the cultural identity of Iranians. As for the economic goals, there is a tangible lack of policies addressing the above-mentioned capacities. While it has been mostly paid attention to the domestic use of the capacities and attraction of the domestic tourists traveling around Iran, achieving sustainable economic development in the field of tourism requires public and cultural policy-making that is both scientific and exact and can prepare the ground for the extensive attraction of foreign tourists through making these capacities known worldwide.

Another goal of the present study is to examine the status of ancient cultural heritage (particularly that of the Achaemenid Empire) in the mechanisms of various cultural

bodies in the Islamic Republic of Iran playing a role in policy-making and implementing the policies. The description of duties, performance, and goal-setting of these bodies was exactly studied and examined and it was reviewed through a critical and analytical approach. The analyses carried out of the paragraphs on the duties and goals of the bodies show that most of the governmental organizations and bodies in charge of cultural issues in Iran have either not addressed the issue of ancient cultural heritage or have touched upon this issue very briefly and ambiguously. Most of these bodies are organizations with religious and ideological policies that consider their main duty and mission as the propagation of Islamic and revolutionary culture.

The basic reason for not addressing Iran's ancient cultural heritage (Emphasizing Achaemenid Empire) properly is the policy-making approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The approach adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of cultural policy-making has been an idealist and ideological approach. This perception has made the authorities not seriously consider whatever is far or seems to be far from their desirable ideal (that is a society with original Shia culture). This issue relates to the nature of the ideology and its property of generating a discourse. The ideology always tries to generate a familiar discourse against a foreign discourse by delineating between "we" and others. Since the ancient period was based on monarchy, the Islamic Republic, considering the destruction of Taghuti monarchy as one of its main qualities, is angry at it. Also, some of the inattention to the ancient heritage of the Achaemenid Empire can be considered as originating from the obvious hostility of the Islamic Republic towards the policies of the Pahlavi dynasty. There was a very positive and special attitude towards Achaemenid Empire during the Pahlavi period because of the emphasis of the ruling system on the ancient components of Iranian identity. As a result, the denial of the policies and

perspectives adopted by the Pahlavi dynasty inexorably led to the rejection or indifference to ancient history and in particular the history of the Achaemenid Empire.

Another fundamental reason for the inattention to ancient heritage can be the idea of cultural invasion. According to this idea, western culture intends to secretly influence to isolate and destroy the Islamic and Shia cultures. The special attitude of the west and western tourists towards the heritage of the Achaemenid Empire and ancient Iran makes the Islamic Republic fear that valuing this heritage prepares the ground for the cultural invasion. Thus, the Islamic Republic has put on the agenda the emphasis on the Islamic Heritage as the substitute for Iran's ancient heritage and the attempt to present it as representing Iranian culture.

Adopting a non-functional and non-scientific approach towards culture is another reason for this inattention to ancient heritage. The functional and scientific approach that is somehow described with the strong conflicting points concerning the ideological approach to culture considers the attention to the objectivities and realities and the optimum utilization of them to achieve the desirable and preplanned objectives as its fundamental principle. This approach seeks to make the best use of the repertoire and opportunities to attain the goals. The bodies and authorities in charge of the cultural affairs in Iran should deem Iran's ancient heritage as a functional opportunity and gain some positive and useful achievements for the economy and culture of the country. That is some achievements that can help survive and preserve the ruling political system while the lack of a functional attitude makes the authorities ignore these capacities.

Still another reason for the inattention to the ancient heritage should be deemed the static attitude of the Islamic Republic of Iran to culture. In this static attitude, as

opposed to the dynamic attitude to the culture, culture is deemed a solid, invariant, and non-dialogic matter. This attitude towards culture leads to the ignorance of the soft, dialogic, and exchangeable quality of culture. As a result, it is expected that the Islamic culture and civilization that have replaced Iran's ancient culture have not been inspired by the ancient culture and have not influenced it either. Therefore, Iran's ancient culture has been rendered obsolete as a foreign and inefficient culture because of the lack of a dynamic approach and as a result a dialogic approach to culture. This is the case while it is possible to mention some architectural and art styles in the post-Islam period where a combination of Islamic culture and Iran's ancient culture has been mixed desirably.

Also, it is possible to indicate the existence of some ambiguous policy-making structure in the Islamic Republic of Iran as another relevant reason. The existence of multiple, parallel, and confused bodies involved in making and executing policies has created a non-integrated and non-purposeful atmosphere in the field of cultural policy-making. Since each body and authority in charge of the cultural affairs have some differences and common grounds in their policies and basic principles, this creates some intervention, task duplications, and unplanned operations in the field of policy-making. This issue results in the lack of a clear and consistent policy towards some issues, such as ancient cultural heritage.

In general, it seems that the attempts to formulate the macro policies in the field of cultural heritage and tourism are inadequate in quantity and quality, and they are not in right appropriate to the huge potential of Iran in the field of cultural heritage and tourism. Also, concerning the attention paid to the heritage of both ancient and Islamic periods, though most of the attention and emphasis has been given to the cultural heritage of Islamic civilization, it seems that this issue has been addressed and noted in the upstream documents inadequately.

## **Chapter 3: Methods and stages of research**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The methodology is one of the most critical steps of research. Obtaining credible results requires using a suitable research methodology that is compatible with the research problem. The research methodology demonstrates the optimal way to accomplish the research goals. The research methodology effectively sheds light on the correct path for the researcher. This chapter addresses the following: research type, research methodology, research population, research sample, and the sampling methods, followed by a presenting tool description, the data collection method, research validity and reliability, the data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

### **3.2. Research Type and Methodology**

#### **3.2.1. Research Type**

Fundamental research addresses the exploration of the nature of objects, phenomena, and the relationships between variables, principles, regulations, theory-building or theory-testing, and contributes to the expansion of knowledge frontiers in a discipline. Applied research uses fundamental research results to improve and perfect the behaviors, methods, tools, equipment, products, structures, and patterns used in human societies. Applied research mainly focuses on identifying immediate solutions to problems of a practical nature (objective and specific results). Also, in applied research, researchers are involved in applying the research results. Fundamental research aims to develop applied knowledge in a specific field and employ new methods to improve a particular subject's existing status. The objective of fundamental research is the creation of interaction between thought and action to identify solutions to improve the existing condition of the IRI's cultural policy structure and provide a new supportive method for the country to benefit, more tangibly, from the potential advantages of ancient Iranian civilization.

### **3-2-2. Research Methodology**

The research methodology is one of the essential parts of any research study to obtain responses to research questions. Achieving scientific and adducible results without considering the research methodology and adopting the necessary approaches is impossible in all research studies. Hence, it is critical to determine the research methodology before the data collection stage.

This study uses a qualitative method and employs a descriptive-analytical approach for data collection using a combination of various methods. In other words, the researcher not only has described the current condition but also analyzed its ontology and different dimensions. Then, the researcher has utilized documents, interviews, and observations to analyze the collected data.

Since this is a qualitative research study, it initially presents definitions, characteristics, and stages of qualitative research. Qualitative research is a systematic method for describing conditions and characteristics of unquantifiable human phenomena. In this method, the findings are obtained neither statistically nor using any form of quantification. In other words, qualitative research is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of rich and narrative data to have a deep understanding of those concepts and phenomena with high complexity in response to the presence of the human factor. (Shamsmoattar, 2009, p 7).

This method requires the discovery and completion of facts and values in inseparable and intertwined ways. Also, it needs fact verification through the systematic collection of data and analysis of phenomenon-originated data. Qualitative research does not aim to generalize information (except in some case studies). It intends to explain and clarify specific cases. The results of qualitative methods are more descriptive. Also, descriptive data are usually collected by documentation, observation, and interview, based on which inferences are easily extractable. In fact, in this method, the researcher expounds and determines the reasons for how a

phenomenon occurs and addresses why a problem reaches a status, and discusses its dimensions.

### **3-3. Determining the statistical population and the sampling method**

#### **3-3-1. Statistical population**

A set of people, objects, or generally, phenomena to which the researcher can generalize the study result. The statistical population of the research is identifiable by one or more common attributes. Based on the data collection methods, the statistical population is divided into two main categories:

- 1- The remains, documents, and evidence left of the Achaemenid civilization
- 2- Managers, intellectuals, laws, and documents related to the Islamic Republic of Iran's cultural policy.

#### **3-3-2. Sample volume**

The large extent of the statistical population often makes it impossible to separately refer to and study all the individuals of the population. In that case, the researcher has to study a part of the statistical population and generalize the results to the whole statistical population. The sample is defined as referring to a part of the statistical population to identify all of the individuals in the population.

In the first stage, this research generally investigated the upstream and downstream documents, books, and articles related to the IRI's cultural policy and used the sponsoring sections related to ancient Iran as the study sample.

The second stage of this research includes interviews with senior managers and cultural intellectuals as influential figures and the investigation of the National Museums of Iran, Reza Abbasi Museum in Tehran, and the Persepolis Museum, Pasargadae, and Persepolis sites in Fars, Iran as the best locations in terms of 19

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<sup>19</sup> The selection of these locations helps determine the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the highest level of protection of these monuments and their introduction (publication) to others (foreigners). Besides, its success rate generalizable to lower levels. Generalized.

global reputation, maintenance, and restoration. The research considers the places mentioned above study samples.

### **3-3-3. The Sampling methods**

No qualitative research can cover all the details of the occurrences in research. Sampling in qualitative research is highly different than in quantitative research. This significant difference is the aim of the former to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question rather than generalizations. Qualitative research is not feasible by rigid and rigorous quantitative methods. Hence the tools and methods of qualitative research are different from those of quantitative research.

Sampling methods are divided into random and non-random sampling: often, the non-random (purposive) sampling method applies to confirming pre-existing theories, especially for qualitative data analysis to enable the researcher to describe a phenomenon in a single part of the statistical population. Targeted sampling is, by definition, the purposeful selection of research units to acquire knowledge or information. Targeted sampling eliminates random selection and involves selecting the units or items to be researched based on the research aim (Ranjbar et al., 2012, p241).

Based on this pattern, the research selects those samples with particular properties and attributes and eliminates incompatible ones. The researcher's sample-selection criterion for the study is their positive influence in understanding the research problem. In judgmental sampling, the researcher does sampling based on their opinion and judgment about members of the statistical population. The selection or non-selection of a member of the population as the sample is dependent on the researcher's view and experiences.

Using their knowledge about the members of the statistical population, the researcher selects the study samples by employing the non-random (purposive) and



judgmental sampling methods to describe and interpret the subject based on the collected data.

### **3-4. Data collection: tools and methods**

Data collection is one of the substantial parts of any research study. The systematic and explicit data collection will accelerate data analysis and conclusion more accurately.

The principal data collection methods in qualitative research are participating in research, direct observation, in-depth interview, and document investigation, which are the foundation of qualitative research. The research studies employ other methods with more specificity as complementary methods. (Rossman and Marshall, 2011).

This study used a combination of documentary and field research methods including observation and in-depth interviews for data collection. The approach and questions of the research determine the longitudinal and cross-sectional application of these techniques. It should be noted that these techniques and the forms of applying them are not paradigmatically contradictory.

This research used the documentary and library research methods to identify the laws and the IRI's cultural policy system and introduce the Achaemenid civilization<sup>20</sup>.

#### **3-4-1. The Documentary-library method**

In this method, the research uses valid documents, books, scientific articles, and other authoritative written sources that help advance the research (Sarokhani, 2014, p 126). Generally, studies using this method are categorized as qualitative research. In qualitative research, the researcher can evaluate and analyze the collected data

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<sup>20</sup> Insufficient sources on ancient Iran, especially the Achaemenid dynasty in the library of the University (Barcelona), the researcher had to include a brief but necessary and useful introduction of this civilization in the second chapter to clarify the subject for the audience and provide a valuable source for other researchers who work on the Achaemenid civilization and culture. It should be noted that some of the findings of this research, which are related to this civilization, are unique, even to Iranians. Some of the recent findings include the religion of the rulers and common people during the Achaemenid period. Of course, the illiteracy regarding this is also attributable to defective public education, differences of views among researchers, and the cultural policy adopted by the IRI.

through deductive and inductive reasoning, allegory, simile, and analogy, all of which are conducted with the help of thinking, reasoning, and logic. The documentary method is useful in cases where subjects are not available for interviews. In the documentary method, key figures and experts address the issue by studying the written works instead of directly studying the subjects. In other words, the subjects are studies based on the written form of their thoughts. (Blaky, 2003, p 164).

Another method used in this research is the field study method, in which the researcher is directly and immediately involved with the study sample and collects immediate data from the research field (Sarokhani, 2014). This paper divides the field study into interviews and observations.

### **3-4-2. Interview**

Some researchers regard interviewing as the safest and optimal data collection method. If implemented properly and in compliance with scientific standards, the method can be undoubtedly the most comprehensive method for data collection (Nabavi, 1994, p 140). There are two principal types of interviews: structured (close-ended) and unstructured (open-ended). Structured interviewing applies to the quantitative approach. The questions are designed in the form of a close-ended questionnaire through items and then are tested, whereas, in open-ended interviews, respondents are entirely free to respond to questions. Such interviews are known as open-ended (free) interviews in which the interviewer determines the framework and limits of the questions, and the time and question type depend on their taste and can also ask more questions. Likewise, the interviewee calmly expresses the answers in the method and language they desire. The purpose of this method is to collect in-depth and qualitative information. Open-ended interviews are often more useful than structured interviews (Khaki, 1999, p 54).

In Research Methodology in Social Sciences, Sarokhani expresses his view about this type of interview: The questioner has complete freedom to ask questions, and the interviewee has total freedom in answering the question. In other words, the interviewer asks what they deem necessary and feels not limited in asking questions (Sarokhani, 1994, p 214).

The open-ended interviews, also known as in-depth interviews, provide the interviewee with an in-depth understanding of their intentions, perspectives, views, thoughts, and perceptions of the realities of the subject in the study through creating an empathetic perception. The important point is that in this type of interview, the questions are preorganized and can also be clarified for the interview in case of ambiguity. An experienced researcher combined with asking appropriate questions can help collect meaningful data. In an in-depth interview, the researcher has more control over data construction (Iman and Boostani, 2010, p 7).

This study used non-structured interviews to reach a more profound perception of the research issue. Therefore, the study interviewed a sample population of members related to the cultural policy including experts, specialists, academics, managers, and policymakers.

As previously mentioned in the section about the sampling method, the interviewees are selected purposefully with prior knowledge. These interviews with the cultural experts can improve the findings of the library-based study since they will provide data that are occasionally undocumented, oral, scarce, valuable, and the product of direct and immediate contact with cultural policymakers.

### **3-4-2-1. Interview methods**

Interviews have eight stages: 1- determining the purpose of the research 2- sample selection 3- designing interview method and structure 4- the formulation of interview questions 5- selecting and training the interviewers 6- primary research conduction 7- main interviews 8- data analysis (Gal, Bourge, 2007, p 524).

In the main interview stage of this research, the researcher recorded all the data and conversations and transcribed them into texts, which were then had proofread, if needed<sup>21</sup>. Throughout this process, the researcher attempted to protect the views of the interviewees.

### **3-4-2-2. Interview questions**

In each of the interviews, the interviewer clearly and purposefully asked the questions based on the main research questions and the theoretical framework while providing the necessary explanations to make the interviewees more familiar with the research aims. If the interviewee finds a question ambiguous, the interviewer is permitted to alter the question text to make it understandable to the interviewer. During the interview, the researcher attempts to foster a suitable space for the optimal expression of ideas for the interviewee by offering the necessary support and empathy and designing supportive questions. If needed, the interviewer can change the order of the questions and adapt it to the interviewee's words to collect more information from them (Rafipour, 2005, p 306).

The team explained the aims of this research after meeting with the managers and other qualified cultural figures. They were entirely informed of the voluntary nature of this research and data confidentiality. The following lines present a set of questions asked by the interviewees. It should be noted that not all the questions were asked.

1. What are the influences of laws, approaches, and budgeting methods in the Islamic Republic of Iran on the conservation, restoration, and introduction of Iran's ancient civilization?
2. What is the distinction between Iranian civilization before/after Islam in the Islamic Republic of Iran's attitude and approach? In other words, since Islam

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<sup>21</sup> If the respondent were not fluent in English, and the interviews were in Persian, the study transcribed the interview into Persian text and finally translated it from Persian to English.

arrived in Iran, Iran has been dealing with the question that which one is superior, Iran or Islam, and if there is any natural conflict between Islam and Iran?

3. What views do the governments (those from the beginning of the Revolution to the end of the 11th government/ Government of Hassan Rouhani) and the various parties in the Islamic Republic hold about the civilization of ancient Iran?
4. How much of the capacity of other fields (sports, art, politics, etc.) are utilized to introduce the civilization of ancient Iran? (Use of ancient names and symbols for successful teams in sports, of ancient images on the national money, to produce movies and animations around ancient Iran, to participate in international exhibitions, etc.)
5. How do private institutions operate in the structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran to preserve, restore and introduce ancient Iran's art and civilization?
6. What are the short-term and long-term goals of the Islamic Republic's educational, research, and training organizations including schools, universities, etc., for people to understand the art and civilization of ancient Iran?
7. How similar are the views of the Islamic Republic government and its people in dealing with the civilization of ancient Iran?
8. How much do the protesters of the Islamic Republic of Iran use symbols of ancient Iran civilization as a uniting factor? Are they trying to place the Islamic Republic against Iran's past and ancient times? Will this result in taking defensive decisions in the cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran?
9. Is celebrating ancient events and symbols in contrast with the thoughts of the Islamic Revolution? Will such actions result in weakening and not supporting

Islamic civilization and the Islamic Republic? (Is honoring Cyrus the Great considered an act against the Revolution?)

10. Were the monarchies before Islam supporting the ancient Iran civilization? Has this affected the support of ancient Iran civilization for the Islamic Republic? (The issue here is Taghut and to fight with remaining symbols of this kind)

Interviewing government officials including ministers and deputies in the field of arts and culture, museums directors and study sites, directors of state media, who are cultural trustees and agents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, help create a richer perception of cultural policies and the implementation of these policies in the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the aim of interviews with cultural elites such as managers of large private institutions, university professors, and artists is to seek the convergence or the differentiation between public and private attitudes, scientific and pragmatic views, and the prevailing culture and the public culture.

Table: the characteristics of interviewees

Row	First Name & Surname	Academic degree	Occupation
1	<b>Bijan Zare</b>	Ph.D. in Sociology/ Tarbiat Modares University	Full professor and faculty member of the Department of Sociology, Kharazmi University (retired), One of the Former Directors of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance
2	<b>Hamid Fadaei</b>	Ph.D. in Restoration of Immovable Cultural Properties/ Art University of Isfahan	Director of Persepolis World Heritage Site, Faculty Member of the Research Institute for the Conservation and Restoration of Historical-Cultural Properties
3	<b>Bahram Ajarloo</b>	Ph.D. in Prehistoric Archeology / University of Tehran	Associate Professor and Member of the College of Applied Arts Faculty, Tabriz Islamic Art University, and Nazar Research Center
4	<b>Mehdi Khoei</b>	Ph.D. in Media Studies / SOAS University of London	Assistant Professor and Member of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University
5	<b>Mehdi Razani</b>	Ph.D. in Conservation and Restoration of Historical-Cultural Objects	Assistant Professor and full-time faculty member of the Department of Restoration and Archeology
6	<b>Hamid Reza Modaqiq</b>	Ph.D. in Communication Sciences / Allameh Tabataba'i University	University lecturer, cultural and artistic chief editor of Iran News Network
7	<b>Ayat Firoozi</b>	Ph.D. in Political Science / University of Tehran	University Lecturer, Media Expert
8	<b>Reza Dabirinejad</b>		Chairman of the Malek Museum
9	<b>Mehdi Sabbaghian Bidgoli</b>	Ph.D. in Media Management / Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch	Editor of Islamic Republic of Iran News Network - Bachelor of Conservation and Restoration of Historical Properties and Buildings - Faculty of Cultural Heritage

Besides, this study tried to employ the documentary-library method as the primary method to identify the cultural policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the issues related to the heritage of ancient Iranian civilization. To this end, the study investigated the upstream and downstream documents, books, and relevant articles. General policies were extracted after data collection. These policies and cultural approaches were then evaluated and underwent a critical review to assess the extent of these policies and their implementation procedures. This study mostly relied on the documents, and data obtained from the country's cultural authorities and related government entities, particularly the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism, and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Moreover, the next section uses the library-documentary method to address the different cultural institutions whose main missions are policymaking, implementation, and supervision. This section attempts to comprehensively study and scientifically analyze the duties, functions, and goals of these entities to determine how much their defined missions reflect the issue of cultural heritage and especially the ancient cultural heritage (emphasizing the Achaemenid period).



Table of organizations in charge of culture

1	Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution
2	Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance
3	Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism
4	Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting
5	Islamic Development Organization
6	Endowment and Charity Organization
7	Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research
8	Islamic Culture and Relations Organization
9	Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly
10	Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)
11	The Coordination Council for Islamic Propagation
12	The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought
13	National Library of Iran

### **3.5. Research Credibility & Reliability**

Reliability is a parameter in qualitative analysis. Various elements can improve reliability. A multiple-methods approach (using interviews along with field observation and document analysis) for data collection indicates the subject is studied from different perspectives and has more reliable findings. Also, the researcher can ask other interpreters to help achieve higher reliability and accuracy when interpreting data. An outsider is sometimes asked to observe the process and inquire about possible biases and misinterpretations wherever necessary.

This research has attempted to use the documentary-library method wherever necessary to answer the research questions. Besides, the paper includes appropriate images of documents where they are needed. The recorded audio and video of the interviews have been stored for later comparison with the research results to improve their credibility. Finally, during field observations, the study took many images, which will be used for a better presentation of this paper.

### **3.6. Data analysis**

Many research studies fall short of a statistical aspect and mainly rely on documents, intuition, and rational analysis. Such research studies also follow the complete process of scientific research and are called qualitative analysis.

In qualitative analysis with descriptive and explanatory methods, the method for the analysis of the attributes of each of the existing variables is described in the analysis. Here, the research goes from external reality to internal reality and delves deep into the text and events to understand the text or event within that context. Causation is also studied under the light of those socio-historical contexts that affect the text or event. Then, it is analyzed based on theory, and the event is determined in the form of general law.

Also, observation is a complementary and instrumental tool in qualitative research. The researcher can show his understanding of a phenomenon using all his senses to

better understand the phenomenon and form the process of a phenomenon. The critical mission of observation in qualitative research is to discover the hidden angles of a management process created in the context of the organization. Rigorous observation of and immersion in the phenomenon in question from the curious perspective of qualitative research and applying the principles and scientific methods of observation make it possible to compare the reality with the research results.

In the analysis section, the researcher should minimize or at least be cautious about the prejudices, views, or assumptions that may interfere with data analysis, which helps them involve less personal judgment in research and study phenomena the way they are. Like all types of research, qualitative research should be based on commitment and adherence to ethical principles. Therefore, measures such as the approval of the ethics committee, permission to enter the research environment, and obtaining a written consent form are among the most important measures to observe the ethical considerations in observation. In observational studies, the researcher should simultaneously adjust the entire steps and formalities of observation to their research requirements and the rights of the participants.

## Chapter 4: Interview

### 4.1. The questions

- 1. What are the influences of laws, approaches, and budgeting methods in the Islamic Republic of Iran on the conservation, restoration, and introduction of Iran's ancient civilization?**

Islam is emphasized with the focus on Shia in the strategic document and the book titled “Cultural Policy of the Islamic Republic”. The founder of the Islamic Republic believed that Islam is the priority and nationality or being Iranian comes next. In the essence of Islamic ideology, we are dealing with the word “Ummah<sup>22</sup> or community” rather than the “nation” and that is why we are facing a Universal viewpoint in rules and approaches, the essence of which is the “Twelver<sup>23</sup>” or “Imamiyyah” (Zare, 2021).

Islamic Revolution is a historical event that occurred in 1979 when a government called the “Islamic Republic” was established.

In the past decades of the Islamic Republic's lifetime, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism (formerly known as Cultural Heritage Organization) and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance have paid special attention to Iran's ancient civilization and culture. Between 2001 and 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs used cultural diplomacy for discourse and negotiation. This discourse of several thousand years of civilization is the result of recent decades and does not have a rich research background. Therefore, the government cannot

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<sup>22</sup> When we speak of Ummah we are speaking about all Shias in the world and the religious part of Iran embraces this definition and spend money to restore holy places outside of Iran in Iraq and Syria

<sup>23</sup> This is a branch of Islam or Shia that believes in the pontificate of 12 Imams after the holy prophet. The Twelver Shia is the biggest branch of Shia in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

establish an accurate policy on this discourse of several thousand years of civilization (Dabirinejad, 2021).

According to the “Protection of National Heritage” law, approved by the National Consultative Assembly in 1930-31 during the Pahlavi reign, Islamic and non-Islamic cultural, artistic, and historic monuments, since the Qajar<sup>24</sup> period shall be covered by the law if they are registered in the list of national heritage. After Islamic Revolution in 1979, any monument listed as national heritage was placed under the supervision of the Cultural Heritage Organization and subject to the law’s protection. The Cultural Heritage Organization, which has now been turned into a ministry, has laws and regulations to protect Iran’s cultural heritage, both material and spiritual (with emphasis on material heritage).

Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts forms its policies in two areas, (1) cultural heritage administration and the research workshops under the supervision of this administration and (2) Archaeological research institute of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ministry’s Research Center) and these two areas do not clearly distinguish pre-Islamic and post-Islamic Iran. In case of any difference, it will be due to categorizing of researchers or the prioritization of general provincial administrations. Priorities of general provincial administrations are divided into two categories: (1) the domain of Tourism and Travel with the priority of monuments registered in UNESCO lists such as monuments that belong to the Achaemenid Empire and Sasanian Empire (Persepolis, Pasargadae, etc.) in Fars province that has a lot to say in comparison to monuments during the Zand dynasty (Vakil Bazaar and Bath<sup>25</sup>) (Fig 1). In Isfahan, however, (2) researching monuments

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<sup>24</sup> 130 years of Iran’s history between 1796 and 1925 under the reign of the Qajar dynasty.

<sup>25</sup> The Vakil bath was built in the Zand dynasty by Karim khan Zand in the heart of the town near other Zand buildings like Vakil Bazar and Vakil mosque. This monument is registered as number 917 in Iran’s list of national heritages. The construction date is 1760.

belonging to Safavid Dynasty (Naqsh-e Jahan Square<sup>26</sup>, Chehel Sotoon Palace<sup>27</sup>, Si O Se Pol Bridge<sup>28</sup>, etc.) (Fig 2) is preferable to pre-Islamic monuments (Ajorlou, 2020-21).



Figure 1: A- Vakil Bazaar, B- Wakil Bath, C and D- Vakil Mosque in Shiraz, southern Iran

<sup>26</sup> Naqsh-e Jahan Square is the central square of Isfahan with monuments in its four corners including Aali qapu, Shah Mosque (Imam's Mosque), Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, and Qeysarie gate as the main entrance of Isfahan's Bazaar.

<sup>27</sup> The Chehel sotoun palace of Isfahan is a historic monument of Isfahan. Abbas the great began its construction. It has a house in the middle with 20 columns.

<sup>28</sup> Si O Se Pol bridge or Allahverdi Khan Bridge is a bridge with 33 openings under it and 295 m of height and 14 m of width built on the Zayanderud river in Isfahan concurrent with Abbas the great's reign.





Figure 2: A- Naqsh-e Jahan Square, B and C- Chehel Sotoon Palace, D- Si O Se Pol Bridge

In 1975, Iran joined the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO). Constructions registered in this list shall be under international protection and supervision. UNESCO considers these monuments as a joint world heritage. As a member of UNESCO, Iran agreed to introduce its registered monuments and attempt to preserve, restore and introduce them. Protection and restoration is the first step. As the public sensitivity to historical monuments increases, society becomes more inclined to protect them collectively. Cultural heritage has developed significantly since the Islamic Revolution. Currently, Iran has about 35,000 constructions, historical sites, and immovable monuments registered in the national heritage. This

number was about 4500 before the Revolution. Also, these structures are budgeted based on their significance (Razani, 2020-21).

The budget allocated to cultural heritage is divided based on the prioritization of the administrative areas in that region or the authority of the actors and the high-ranking expert in Tehran's Cultural Heritage Research Center. Hence, it seems that there is no aggressive policy against the historical heritage of pre-Islamic Iran.

Unfortunately, cultural organizations are not given the value they deserve in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It should be said that the budgets considered for cultural organizations are not suitable based on Iran's large body of monuments, and Iran's rich and multilayered history. Regarding the allocations for preserving historical monuments, the secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism said that:

“If we divide the number of registered monuments by the allocated credits, an insignificant amount of money will be allocated to each monument. We cannot afford to preserve the historical monuments with this budget.” (Dr. Fadaei, 2020-21)

The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution approves and announces the cultural policies in Iran. In this council, various actions and situations associated with Islamic culture and art will be approved. Until now, however, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution has not explicitly announced a positive or negative clause or case about Iran before Islam. In the Islamic Republic, culture is limited to religion and religion to Shia traditions/culture. This attitude negatively influences the budget of non-revolutionary and Islamic monuments in Iran. It should be noted that religion only accounts for one of a hundred parts of the culture.

On the other hand, the priority of a cultural chairman in East Azarbaijan province is issues associated with cultural heritage in that province and he/she will not care



about the Persepolis, as the symbol of Ancient Iran. However, it is natural that the chairman of Fars province will be concerned about Persepolis. Note that geographical issues influence cultural policy-making and its implementation. Ultimately, the budget is allocated based on the geography of the monument. Note that such principles are not applied properly at times. For example, Fars province should be the Symbol of ancient Iran but such things have not happened at least during the last previous decades. The National Museum of Iran has been known as the hub of international coordination with different museums and organizations (Ajorlou, 2020-21).

From the Revolution in 1979 to the current days, it seems that the focus on the national and ancient heritage has increased. In the first years of the revolution, due to the sensitive situation of the country, protection and restoration of historical and antiquities were less focused on. After those periods passed and Iran's conditions finally became stable protection and restoration of historical and antiquities were focused on more (Sabbaghian Bigdeli, 2020-21).

**2. What is the Islamic Republic of Iran's distinction between Iranian civilizations before and after Islam in terms of attitude and approach? In other words, Iran has faced the question of which one is superior, Iran or Islam? since Islam's arrival in Iran. Is there an inherent conflict between Islam and Iran?**

The Islamic Republic seeks to establish an Islamic government and a new civilization based on the Imamiyyah. It seems that the Revolution of 1979 inherently showed the conflict between the banishment of history and Islam and elements of Islamic civilization. Iran has a written history of almost 2600 years and we have even seen remains of civilizations and monuments with the age of more than 8,000 years in the Iranian Plateau. In terms of cultural issues, we can divide Iran's history

into three categories: Pre-Islamic Iran, Islamic Iran, and Iran's modern Period<sup>29</sup>, which are highly intertwined.

The Pahlavi dynasty focused closely on nationalism and Iranian identity before Islam but did not deny Islam. However, the Islamic republic initiated its policies by denying the elements before our Islamic civilization and choosing the Imamiyyah branch of Islam. It must be noted that these matters include our past and we cannot deny any of them. The best we can do is understand how to combine these categories and give each of them their corresponding weight (Zare, 2020-21).

Some people believe that religion is opposed to being Iranian and Archaism. Based on the Constitution of Iran and its Islamic leader's speeches, the importance of Iran's history and Iranian legends can be seen and the Islamic Republic does not ignore these facts.

History has a significant research value and plays a crucial role. We cannot consider one part of history more valuable than another. In the Islamic Republic, we may see views in which one part of history is considered superior to the other. However, a view is not officially recorded or registered (Fadai, 1400).

In different periods of Iranian history, being Iranian and Islamic was dealt with in numerous ways. It seems that these two were together for some time in history and interloped and opposed each other at other times (Dabirinezhad, 2020-21).

If the Iranians conditions were better today and were not occupied with livelihood, they would not want any conflict between Ancient and Islamic Iran. Iranians believe that there is no conflict between Ancient and Islamic Iran. Being Iranian and Muslim find meaning together (Khoei, 2020-21).

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<sup>29</sup> UNESCO world heritage registered sites in Iran include 24 historical, cultural, and natural sites.

As the known Persian poet, Rumi<sup>30</sup>, says:

“My heart is weary of these weak-spirited fellow-travelers / I aspire for the Lion of God and Rostam of Dastan”

Before the Islamic Revolution, ancient elements were being used extremely during the Pahlavi dynasty. Elements of the Achaemenid period were being used in celebrations and as symbols in the architecture of famous structures, e.g., National and Central Banks and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Fig 3). This enthusiasm did not disappear after the revolution but Islamic celebrations, structures, and heritage symbols were added. Hence, it can be concluded that the focus on antiquities did not disappear and there is no conflict can be seen between Iran and Islam (Razani, 2020-21).

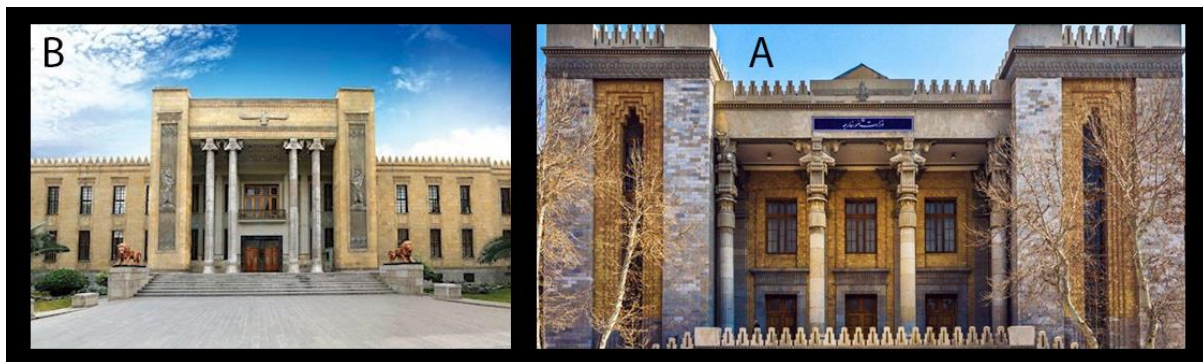


Figure 3: A- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, B-National and Central Banks in Tehran

There is no separation between Iran and Islam. These two are similar to a container and content since Islam has taken an exclusive form in Iran. Pahlavi dynasty was focusing on archaism, especially the Achaemenid period which constitutes a short period in the history of ancient Iran. It should be noted that ancient times are more

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<sup>30</sup> Jalal Adin Mohammad Balkhi the famous poet of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (AC) also known as Mowlavi, Mowlawna, and Rumi in the world. Mowlavi’s language was Persian. He is highly regarded in Iranian literature, mysticism, and ethics. Mowlawna is without a doubt a great master of mysticism and Persian literature.

extensive than the Achaemenid period. The Islamic Republic is especially focused on religion. Since ancient Iran and religion were integrated, separating Iran and Islam is impossible, and trying to do so is biased (Firoozi, 1400).

The fact that Islamic is added to the Revolution means that the cultural approach of this Republic is focused on the Islamic era is a point worth reflection. This shows the direct reaction to the immoderate focus of the Pahlavi dynasty, especially Reza Shah himself, to Iran before Islam. This reaction led to opposition to the remaining monuments of the Pahlavi state. It was said that destroying The Tomb of Ferdowsi or Ferdowsi statue was part of the plan and some known figures showed negative reactions to Ferdowsi's Shahnameh (Ferdowsi is a Persian poet and the writer of the epic poem Shahnameh, the symbol of myths, champions, and Iranian kings). After these extreme periods, it seems the focus on Islamic Iran has increased relative to ancient Iran. For example, we can mention the establishment of museums, by the Islamic Republic, associated with the Islamic era in many parts of the country. Some of these museums are mentioned as follows: The Museum of the Islamic Era and The Museum of Ancient Iran. It should be noted that the Islamic Republic pays special attention to the Safavid period (founders of Twelver Shiism in Iran) (Modaqqiq, 2020-21).

Based on what the sociologist Dr. Zareh has said, the Islamic republic recognizes its identity based on the Islamic symbols and Shia guidelines but some of the principles are different from other Sunni Muslims. The ideological view in the Islamic Republic expresses this slogan, "you are either with us or against us". considering the civilization of Iran before Islam, the Islamic Republic thinks that this system will be condemned if it pays attention to ancient Iran. Therefore, the Islamic Republic ignores and sometimes opposes the civilization of Ancient Iran. This has caused young generations to be highly interested in Ancient Iran (Zare, 2020-21).

Academically, there is no inherent conflict between Islam and Iran. The Islamic Republic thinks that Reza Shah Pahlavi's high interest in archaism and Iran before Islam is an external matter and sign of intellectualism and Westernism, but the existing reasons prove otherwise. According to the evidence, there is cohesion from the pre-Islamic era to Islamic times. For example, Fath-Ali Shah<sup>31</sup> of the Qajar dynasty creates his monument along with the Sassanid Period monuments in Rey and Kermanshah (Fig 4) or you can sense the memories of the Sasanid dynasty strongly in the poems of Nizami Ganjavi<sup>32</sup> in the literature during the Islamic period. During the Ilkhanid period, a coin that was called Sasani Shah (Anushirvan The just) was minted. These indicate the awareness of different Islamic periods about the pre-Islamic period of Iran and historical cohesion until the end of the Qajar period. Therefore, the above statement "the Pahlavi Reza Shah's high interest in archaism and Iran before Islam is an external matter and sign of intellectualism and westernism" can be rejected.

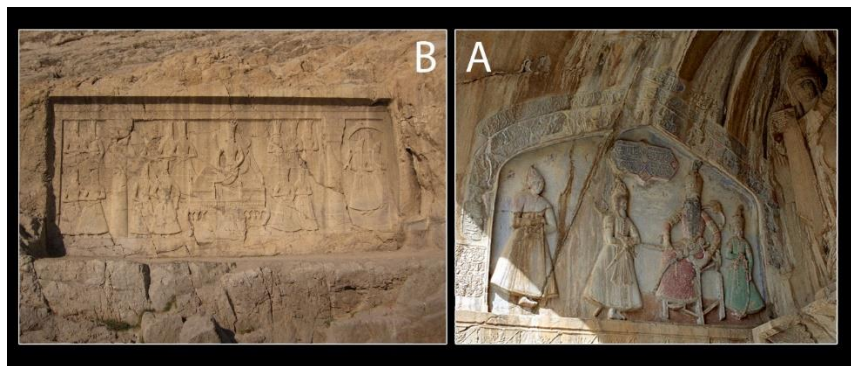


Figure 4: A- relief of Fath Ali Shah, the Qajar king added to the ancient complex in the 19th century. B- Qajar relief, Cheshmeh Ali - Rey

The Islamic Republic believes that political propaganda during the Pahlavi era created a duality between Iran before Islam and after Islam. This resulted in more

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<sup>31</sup> Fath-Ali Shah Qajar was a Qajar dynasty king that reigned from 1797-1834 AC. He ruled for 37 years and two months.

<sup>32</sup> Hakim Nizami was a poet and novelist in the twelfth century AC with his own style that led in story telling of Persian literature.

focus on the ancient civilization of Iran and the Achaemenid period is considered a significant part of this period. We can see this duality during the period after the revolution but it benefits the Islamic period this time. It can be concluded that none of the mentioned governments has looked at Iran civilization as a whole (Ayorlou, 2020-21)

It is worth mentioning that in the last few decades, the discourse of the Islamic Republic, although it had a single title was not single. The Islamic Republic has had a halfway approach to history and civilization before Islam for several decades, with none of them appropriate for the pre-Islamic conditions and reality of Iran (Khoei, 2020-21).

Since leaders of the Islamic Republic are graduates of seminaries, therefore, it is more important to them to tend to Islam and its teachings rather than ancient Iran. The Islamic Republic considers its ideology superior to other ideologies within the country. Therefore, it is natural for it to pay attention to the cases that make this ideology more known to the world and bring it under the center of attention. In the Islamic Republic, preserving and restoring historical monuments belonging to the Islamic era is a priority and Iran's antiquities come next. Of course, this does not mean that the Islamic Republic is indifferent to antiquities (Sabbaghian Bigdeli, 2020-21).

**3. What views do the governments (those from the beginning of the Revolution to the end of the 11th government/ Government of Hassan Rouhani) and the various parties in the Islamic Republic hold about the civilization of ancient Iran?**

There are a few differences in the views. However, the difference between left-wing and right-wing groups in the Islamic Republic is not significant due to having a single structure (Zare, 2020-21).

The various governments and parties in the Islamic Republic cannot be excluded from the Islamic Republic. The policies of parties and governments agree with the ideas, thoughts, and infrastructure of the Islamic Republic. Although we may sense some differences in speech, the system policy is integrated as a whole (Firoozi, 2020-21).

All the leaders of the country have visited the prominent buildings/structures of ancient Iran. For example, Ayatollah Khamenei (supreme leader of Iran) traveled to Shiraz to see the “Persepolis” and also, wrote a note there<sup>33</sup> (Fig 5) Moreover, Dr. Mohammad Khatami, reformist president and spiritual leader of this current, took an ancient adobe to the UN and presented it to this organization to talk about Civilization and “Dialogue among Civilizations”. However, this behavior from the high-ranking officials in Iran should not be interpreted as caring behavior and an effort to preserve these monuments. It should be noted that governments haven’t visited Cultural Heritage Organization after the revolution. Also, those who were placed at the highest position of this organization do not have proper education associated and familiarity with Iran’s cultural heritage.

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<sup>33</sup> In December 3, 1988 ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei travelled to Marvdasht city in Fars County and went to see Persepolis and wrote a note saying: While visiting the historical monument of Persepolis I saw two important points: (1) The art and brilliant skill that had created a monument with the use of only man power, perseverance, with natural resources and no advanced tools which is still astonishing after the centuries have passed. (2) and, a good deal of tyranny that had led to the formation of such thrones only to add to his tyranny and power and as the epigraphy says one has become the ruler of many...

We must consider this remnant as a valuable treasure through which we can see mankind, Iran, Iranians and the results and the holy traditions of God which we must protect.



*Figure 5: Ayatollah Khamenei (supreme leader of Iran) traveled to Shiraz to see the "Persepolis"*

There have been various discourses in the Islamic Republic. In the early decade, this issue was influenced by the Islamic Revolution and the discourse was gotten closer to the Islamic periods. In the 90s, however, the boundary between the Islamic and ancient periods of Iran is broken. In the 2000s, Ahmadinejad (former president of Iran), was thought to be inclined to the pre-Islamic period, although he was a follower/member of Iranian Conservatives (Dabirinejad, 2020-21).

As mentioned earlier, Dr. Ajrlou believed that the culture and civilization of ancient Iran were extremely opposed but then, the hostility and pessimism over the culture and civilization of ancient Iran, which defines the ideology of the Pahlavi period, have been changing.

Since the beginning of the Revolution, the level of attention has been increasing. Although we cannot expect a high and exclusive focus on cultural heritage at the beginning of the Revolution, cultural heritage found its place after some time and began to grow which Turned the Cultural Heritage Organization into a ministry and combined it with the Tourism and Handicrafts industry which tells of focus and



attention. With this important change, you can expect an increased budget to preserve and restore antiquities (Fadaei, 2020-21).

Although Dr. Razani believes that combining the cultural heritage organization and the tourism and handicraft industry in the 2000-2011 era caused less attention to be paid to restoration, its combination with tourism was beneficial for advertisement purposes (Razani, 2021).

Dr. Modaqiq, one of the managers of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, considers the discourse of the Islamic Republic to bear ups and downs in these decades. He believes that during the war, cultural heritage was not given much attention, but after the 1980s, this situation turned significantly. Although some people opposed archaism in certain periods, ancient Iran has been honored in most periods. It is worth mentioning that the reformist government was focusing on cultural heritage significantly but some governments were not considering this issue a priority. As we move back from the beginning of the Revolution, the opposition between Islamic and Iranian and archaism can be sensed less. In general, the Islamic Republic has focused more on the nature of being Islamic (Modaqiq, 2020-21).

Different governments in the Islamic Republic hold different ideas about cultural heritage and there has been no single policy in this regard. In the reformist government, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami paid significant attention to NGOs and associations related to cultural heritage. After this, numerous structures and sites were registered as national heritage, and many structures, including ancient and Islamic buildings, were preserved and restored. The opposite of the above situations happens during Ahmadinejad's government but Hassan Rouhani Government has focused significantly on cultural heritage associations. Ultimately, Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization turned to a ministry with the order of this government and the approval of the Islamic Consultative Assembly. This

event promises a bright future for the preservation of Iran's historical and ancient monuments (Sabbaghian Bidgoli, 2020-21).

#### **4. How do private institutions operate in the structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran to preserve, restore and introduce ancient Iran's art and civilization?**

The Islamic Republic does not hold a positive view about private and civil institutions, and this view is wrong. Private and civil institutions can help governments in many ways, and on the other hand, governments can also monitor these institutions (Zare, 2020-21).

The privatization conditions are different In Iran. You can see economic rent in any type of privatization in Iran. In the current political economy of Iran, issuance of a license by the government or related organization to operate a certain complex or having a close relationship with the government and authorities to restore and preserve that complex is highly required. These conditions do not benefit the private and public institutions financially. If these institutions believe that reservation, restoration, and introduction of ancient Iran's art and civilization are not benefiting them financially, they will not do any investment in this field (Khoei, 2020-21).

We do not have private institutions for the preservation, restoration, and introduction of ancient Iran's art and civilization, and only have several operating NGOs that advise, criticize, and report cultural heritage activities. As mentioned earlier, obtaining a license from a Cultural Heritage Organization is required to conduct any activity in the field of preservation and restoration. Today, more private institutions are active to recognize, introduce and promote cultural heritage in the field of tourism (Razani, 2020-21).

Private institutions should operate in Iran to improve infrastructure for tourism and attract investments. We must work to introduce our country's cultural assets to the

world. However, there has been no exclusive work carried out as Iran deserves. We must attract more capital to preserve and restore antiquities (Firoozi, 2020-21).

In the last two decades, Islamic Republic has been paying more attention to the restoration and repair of antiquities. The Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization is supporting more investors to benefit the preservation and restoration of historic structures and sites. Therefore, many structures and sites have been turned into hotels, museums, and ancient sites. The support of the Cultural Heritage Organization has led to the restoration and repair of many historic structures and sites, and as a result, saved them from possible destruction. Fortunately, the Islamic Republic has a protective outlook on historic structures and sites (Sabbaghian Bidgoli, 1400).

**5. What are the short-term and long-term goals of the Islamic Republic’s educational, research, and training organizations, including schools, universities, etc., for people to understand the art and civilization of ancient Iran?**

There is no achievement or even a clear horizon defined for educating and understanding ancient Iran’s art and civilization. School graduates acknowledge that they become acquainted with ancient Iranian civilization through their families and personal readings, and textbooks didn’t contain enough information about ancient Iran (Ayorlou, 2020-21).

Therefore, it seems that there are no educational, training, or research plans for understanding ancient Iran’s art and civilization. Of course, you can find related content in the school textbooks. However, policymakers did not consider such programs for universities unless the program itself is associated with ancient Iran.

In the Islamic Republic, an organization called “Islamic advertisement Organization” is tasked with spreading and advertising Islam, but there is no

organization or institution established to advertise ancient Iran. We must also consider the periods of ancient and Islamic periods. Ancient Iran has a history of 6,000 years and the Islamic era is 1400 years old. Unfortunately, the Iranian people are not sufficiently aware of the 6,000 years of ancient Iranian history. Dr. Hojjat believes that our cultural heritage is in perspective, as we further go back, the less information we will have. For example, we do not have books about the Achaemenid period, but we do have inscriptions. There is enough information about the Islamic era. Lack of sufficient knowledge and information about the history of art in ancient Iran has led to a lack of education in this field.

We also have an approach issue meaning that cases associated with this government's policies will be emphasized and supported and, there is no support and structure except for ancient Iran studies at a university level, student theses, and archaeological excavations associated with this period (Razani, 2020-21).

The ruling government creates legends about its history especially if it is ancient history. State-owned organizations must create legends via educational bodies. In the Islamic Republic, the history after Islam has been dealt with frequently, especially periods in which a State based on Twelver Shiism was ruling over the country such as the Safavid dynasty. Emphasizing Islamic history has benefited the Islamic Republic government (Khoei, 2020-21).

With the global wave of effort to preserve cultural heritage, Iran has tried simultaneously to restore parts of its heritage despite all its problems. Since the Islamic period is much closer to our time, more information is available from this period, but most of our information about the ancient period begins from the Achaemenid period. On the one hand, we have Persepolis, which is an admirable monument from ancient times, and on the other hand, we have a lot of mosques belonging to the Islamic era. As the number of the heritage sites of the Islamic era

of Iran is more than the heritage of its ancient times, research bodies and educational content about the Islamic era is richer (Modaqqiq, 2020-21).

If we choose the path of teaching Iranians about the history, civilization, and cultural heritage of Iran from primary school, we will not need introductions about our country and its cultural heritage in the future. During the current century, several countries have newly formed, and are seeking to build an identity for themselves. However, we have history, culture, and identity that should be taught and conveyed properly. Hence, there is some work carried out in education but they were not enough (Firoozi, 1400).

People need to be educated and gain knowledge to get familiar with the history, culture, and cultural heritage of their country. The government has not yet been effective in this regard. We can make people more sensitive to the keywords of history, culture, and cultural heritage through education so that they are passionate and concerned about preserving Iran's cultural heritage (Fadaei, 2020-21).

Dr. Zareh says that people are not educated in the education system of the Islamic Republic regarding ancient Iran and unfortunately, some educational content associated with the history of ancient Iran is removed. Maybe, the supreme leader of Iran does not oppose the history of ancient Iran but some extremist individuals take this opposition to another level. The government uses national and ancient values if special cases occur and conditions occur. Religious teaching can be found in student textbooks in abundance from primary school to universities. This policy of the education system of the Islamic Republic has not caused an optimal result and we can see atheism and apostasy in the country (Zare, 2020-21).

The younger generations, who visit museums on behalf of schools and universities, are inclined to visit ancient antiquities more than Islamic antiquities. When students came to visit the Malek Museum, the section associated with coins minted in ancient

Iran attracted more visitors than those in the Islamic period. Based on the records, the number of visits to The Museum of Ancient Iran, Glassware Museum of Iran, and Reza Abbasi Museum that are exhibiting antiquities before Islam is more than the number of visits to museums exhibiting antiquities from the Islamic period. A plan called "Purposeful Education", whose primary focus was ancient Iran was conducted with the participation of the Cultural Heritage and Education Organization between 2001 to 2009 in the schools (Dabirinejad, 2020-21).

Unfortunately, the cultural heritage of our country has not been taught by the education system of the Islamic Republic properly, as the cultural and ancient heritage of our country deserves. The absence of subjects such as familiarity with Iran's cultural heritage can be sensed deeply among students. Cultural organizations in the Islamic Republic are more concerned with educating and recognizing Islamic ideology and its extension. Unfortunately, the cultural organizations of the Islamic Republic have not made any significant efforts to educate about the ancient heritage of Iran (Sabbaghian Bidgoli, 2020-21).

- 6. How much of the capacity of other fields (sports, art, politics, etc.) are utilized to introduce the civilization of ancient Iran? (Use of ancient names and symbols for successful teams in sports, of ancient images on the national money, to produce movies and animations around ancient Iran, to participate in international exhibitions, etc.)**

After the revolution, Iran was not stable. In the first decade of the Revolution, the country was at war, and we were busy with renovation in the second decade. During the third decade, the country was reopened, connection with the world was re-established, and the dialogue of civilizations started. In the fourth decade after the Revolution, matters regarding the Revolution were mostly tended to and interpreted. Issues associated with ancient Iran are expected to be addressed in the fifth decade. Currently, this process has begun with the production of new animations, games, and movies around ancient Iran. Of course, one cannot expect the National Iranian Radio and Television to cover the history of ancient Iran and that is since the mission of the Islamic Republic Broadcasting<sup>34</sup> is to advertise the Islamic Revolution in the world (Razani, 2020-21).

We can name the Yadegar Movie Festival which is a cultural heritage movie festival. Not so many countries hold such a festival. In many Iranian movies, historical buildings and sites are mentioned directly or indirectly. Moreover, there are many documents about the structures as well as many historical books about the cultural heritage of Iran, in which the ancient civilization of our country is addressed (Modaqqiq, 2020-21).

Our ancient history has a potential that we should make use of in the best way possible. Ferdowsi divan (Shahnameh) is filled with mythical symbols, based on which good animations have been produced. The Islamic Republic is based on religion and religious symbols take precedence over other symbols in this government. However, we should not exclude other historical symbols. Moreover, these symbols can be used in national celebrations and games. Note that these

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<sup>34</sup> According to the statute of the Islamic Republic Broadcasting Organization the goal of this organization is to create a proper environment for teaching and accelerating the revolutions movement across the globe. These goals are followed in the context of guidance, educational, news, and entertainment programs in this organization.

symbols are not inconsistent with the religious symbols and do not violate religious symbols at all (Firoozi, 2020-21).

In general, the capacity of other fields can be used to introduce ancient Iran, but it is not organized. In some cases, for example, national demand will be required for the use of images belonging to the Achaemenid Empire on national money. This is not a demand now because people are preferring the culture of their ethnicity, for example, people may want certain elements in their province to be printed on the national money. In other words, people of Fars, Isfahan, East Azerbaijan, Guila province may prefer Persepolis, Naqsh-e Jahan Square, Arg-e-Alishah, and gold cups from Marlik symbols respectively to be printed on the national money. However, Islamic Republic uses Islamic culture to end all the diversities and printed Imam Reza's Shrine<sup>35</sup> (Fig 6) on national money.

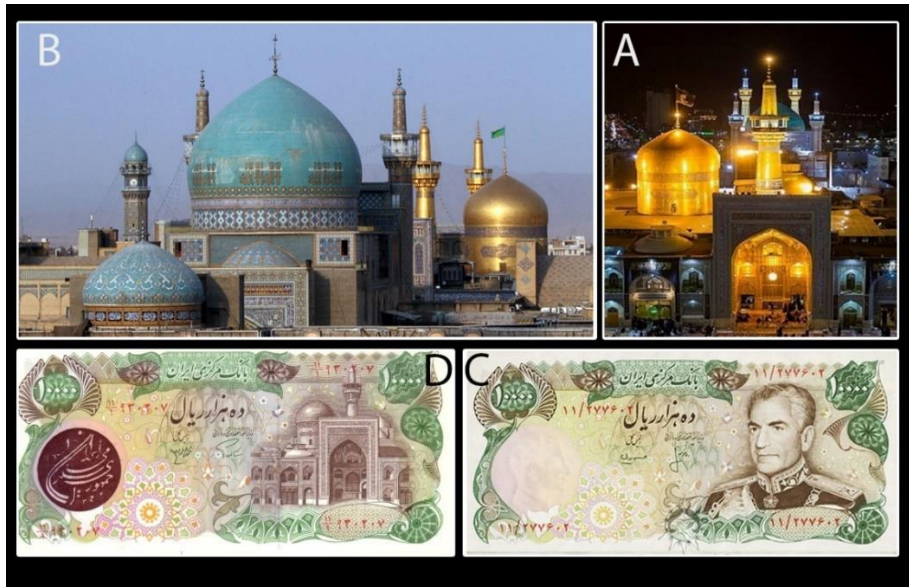


Figure 6:A- Imam Reza Holy Shrine in Mashhad, Iran B- Goharshad Mosque is a grand congregational mosque built during the Timurid period in Mashh C- Thousand Tomans of the second Pahlavi period with the image of Mohammad Reza Shah D- One thousand tomans of the Isl

<sup>35</sup> Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha is the son of Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kadhim and Ummul Banīn Najmah and descendent of the prophet Mohammad. He is the 8<sup>th</sup> Imam of the Twelver Shia. He was martyred in the 5<sup>th</sup> of September in 818 (AC). His resting place is in Mashhad city and is the only Shia Imam to be buried in Iran's current borders.



Ancient symbols have been used to some extent. We are living in a country that has a very long history. People may know about the Achaemenid symbols, but not much about other ancient periods. Audio-visual advanced technologies are being used to raise awareness about the ancient heritage of the country. But the productions were insufficient for attracting the attention of the people and informing them. Another issue is that we should not place one symbol against another. In this period, we saw the presence of nationalist extremists that created this contrast (Fadaei, 2020-21).

During the chairmanship of Mr. Rahim Mashai<sup>36</sup>, as the director of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism, he utilized the capacity of other fields to introduce ancient Iran. However, he encountered obstacles and his actions were constrained. The Islamic Republic was unable to hold conferences and exhibitions regarding ancient Iran abroad. Western universities and academies are mostly establishing such conferences and exhibitions (Khoei, 2020-21).

It seems that the civilization of ancient Iran and even Islamic Iran has no place in the Chart of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Islamic Culture and Communication Organization is the main custodian of cultural relations for foreign policy, and the vast majority of cultural advisors of the Islamic Republic located in embassies are introduced by this organization and their priority is to advertise Shia discourse and Persian literature emphasizing religion. This organization is not obliged to advertise Iran's civilization before Islam. They assume that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism is tasked with the advertisement of Iran's civilization (Ayorlou, 2020-21)

Another issue is that the signs and symbols of different ethnic groups can be used and eulogized. All of these are living under a nation-state that has a governing

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<sup>36</sup> Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei is an Iranian politician in the ninth presidency (presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad), vice president of Iran and the head of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization.

political system. The governing political system does not celebrate ethnicities and does not recognize them. On the other hand, this system does exactly the opposite by suppressing these ethnicities. This greatly increases distances that can lead to the weakening of national identity (Khoi, 2020-21).

In the Islamic Republic, several national and ancient symbols and signs have been used for sports teams (such as Persepolis) and even printed on banknotes (The Tomb of Ferdowsi), but using Islamic symbols such as Ayatollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic, and Imam Reza Shrine, the 8th Shia Imam, has always been the priority (Sabbaghian Bidgoli, 2020-21).

### **7. How similar or different are the views of the Islamic Republic government and its people in dealing with the civilization of ancient Iran?**

If the view of the people and the government are aligned, we can act accordingly and in a balanced manner (Fadaei, 2020-21).

Let us not forget that the Islamic Republic has a long history. The Parthian<sup>37</sup> ruled for about 500 years and we cannot say that four decades of the Islamic Republic's ruling over Iran has diminished or increased the importance of Iran's art and civilization. The civilization of ancient Iran is large enough. The Islamic Republic is both indigenous and controls all of Iran and has not lost any part of this country. Many believe that these characteristics of the Islamic Republic are nationalist behavior and it is a national state/government. Only several post-Islamic governments had the same characteristic that we should product of and aligned with (Razani, 2020-21). On the other hand, we have many identical symbols in the history

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<sup>37</sup> The Parthian dynasty also known as the Parthian empire in western literature was the name of a dynasty, political power, and source of Iranian culture that ruled for 471 years over the majority of western Asia and middle east. This kingdom was established in the third century BC by Arsaces the leader of Iranian tribes after the conquest of Parthia in the north east of Iran.

of ancient Iran that are like the Islamic Republic and we cannot find any contradiction. Regarding justice, it is derived from our historical spirit. The people of Iran have historically and continuously strengthened the symbols of justice and the Islamic Republic is moving in the same direction (Firoozi, 2020-21).

We cannot say that the views of the Islamic Republic government and its people are completely aligned or against each other. In Iran, there is a huge gap between social classes and people have different concerns and issues. The Islamic Republic is not biased about the civilization of ancient Iran. This government has not made a specific investment to support a particular period (Dabirinejad, 2020-21).

People are concerned about the current conditions of providing housing, livelihood, etc. Hence, focusing on supporting or not supporting antiquity is not a priority for people. Additionally, eight years of conflict and then sanctions have not allowed the Islamic Republic to address the infrastructure of the provinces close to the border and the basic needs of those living there. In these conditions, there is no opportunity to address antiquities but the government has paid as much attention to the cultural heritage of the country as possible (Firoozi, 2020-21).

The policy-making issue is also discussed in certain groups. It should be noted that the Iranian archaeologists are very introverted and believe that this field belongs to them by making it a specialized field. Archaeology has entered society less than other fields and therefore, people lack knowledge of this field. (Dabirinejad, 2020-21).

The main question is “Are all people concerned about cultural heritage?” No. People are more concerned about their livelihood today. Are all our officials concerned about cultural heritage? No. We have officials who saw Persepolis as just rocks and mud but we also had officials who paid specific attention to cultural heritage. We are also facing similar problems around the world. I saw a mother who was visiting

The Metropolitan Museum of Art along with her child, she asked her child to look at the monuments. However, not all Americans are like this. Some have concerns about art and heritage and some do not (Modaqqiq, 2020-21).

In general, the Iranian people are aligned with the Islamic Republic in some matters. For example, they have a similar approach to creating myths. Economic conditions and social constraints in the Islamic Republic have made people dissatisfied with the situation, and they see their own country as suppressed. These factors have caused people to reject the approaches of the Islamic Republic and become directed towards a pre-Islamic era of Iran and myths other than what the Islamic Republic says. We can see similarities and alignment in a period before 2008-09 but separation and segregation are the characteristics of years after 2008-09. The further we go, the less legitimate the governing system has become (Khoie, 2020-21).

Other factors that lead to nonalignment include the views of people from different ethnicities and tribes. Each province has its attitudes. National culture has been weakened. The officials of the Islamic Republic have been selected from these people and share their viewpoints. People will choose their city and region over a general national policy although it should be within the main framework of the system (Ajlou, 2020-21).

The people of Iran will prefer the officials of the Islamic Republic to focus more on the civilization and history of ancient Iran. The Islamic Republic focuses mainly on Islam and shows no interest in Iran's ancient heritage. Therefore, it can be said that the views of the officials of the Islamic Republic are not aligned with the views of the Iranian people in this field (Sabbaghian Bidgoli, 2020-21).

**8. How much do the protesters of the Islamic Republic of Iran use symbols of ancient Iran's civilization as a unifying factor? Are they trying to place the Islamic Republic against Iran's past and ancient times? Will this**

## **matter result in taking defensive decisions in the cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran?**

One of the false accusations against the Islamic Republic is that the government is neglecting ancient Iran. In general, this opposition is not a matter that Iran should be worried about and take a defensive position (Firoozi, 2020-21).

The opposition does not have enough power and no one pays significant attention to them. But they can sometimes result in making defensive decisions. In the Islamic Republic, the value placed in people within the country is more than opposition located outside of the country. The main issue is that Islamic Revolution has separated itself from the past of Iran by overthrowing the monarchy in Iran. It will destroy anything related to any monarchy, for example, it does not address Shah Ismail's story, founder of a government based on Twelver Shiism in Iran, as he deserves. This is because the Islamic Republic sees itself as the source of all the goods. Although many such issues have been solved democratically, such a statement and neglecting the whole history is a total mistake (Razani, 2020-21).

The opposition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (opposition), especially monarchy supporters, are using symbols of ancient Iran civilization as a unifying factor. Due to views existing about Islam in the Islamic Republic, even the left-wing religious groups are using the same method. It should be noted that if the opposition does not use these signs, the Islamic Republic will continue its conflict with its enemies (Modaqqiq, 2020-21).

The foreign opposition is seizing the pre-Islamic approach for itself, and that is where the problems start. They want to create a confrontation between ancient Iran and post-Islamic Iran. The foreign opposition tends to create a line between themselves and others, and in doing so, they are hurting the pre-Islamic history of Iran (Dabirinejad, 2020-21).

By polarizing the history of Iran before and after Islam, the opposition is trying to tear apart this civilization. For example, they are redefining the religious symbol of “Ahura Mazda” and using it instead of the Allah symbol on the Islamic Republic flag. On the other hand, high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic are not well acquainted with the pre-Islamic civilization of Iran. Their ignorance can provoke such confrontations. Whenever a symbol or sign is presented by the opposing group, the Islamic Republic also uses a symbol or sign in return. For example, if the Persepolis is the symbol of opposition, Imam Reza Holy Shrine will be the symbol of the Islamic Republic. However, the integrity of Iran’s civilization will be sacrificed here (Ayorlou, 2020-21).

A non-accountable system with concentrated power will collapse. Before the Revolution, the Shah was not accountable. Although the people were interested in religious teachings, the Shah was not paying much attention to religious aspects. The Islamic Republic has taken a similar approach during this period, stating that Islam will save us. There has been no mediation in either of these two eras. Extreme measures at either side of the spectrum becoming problematic. Both groups must recognize the issues of antiquity and Islamism and place them together peacefully (Zare, 2020-21).

Using history as a tool in a dispute is wrong. We have seen putting archaism and Islamism against each other occur before as well. During the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty, the Achaemenid period was paid attention to in an exaggerated manner. Some people wrongly interpreted this infatuation as a symbol of “Taghut” (the focus of worship other than God and source of tyranny) although not officially but rather through unofficial extreme actions. Our history is already damaged enough. The excessive focus on the Achaemenid civilization during the Pahlavi period caused many restrictions for our specialized field regarding ancient Iran and the

Achaemenids at the beginning of the revolution. Many studies could have been conducted about the Achaemenid dynasty, but the opportunity to do them was abolished by the radicals of the Islamic Republic. Opposition groups are now using the same method that may affect the other side (the Islamic Republic) again (Fadaei, 2020-21).

The opposition is eager to show its views about pre-Islamic Iran and to say that they care about the people. The foreign media approach used by the opposition (including the Manoto channel<sup>38</sup>) focuses on the Pahlavi period (with an archaism approach). This approach is in contrast with the current situation of the Islamic Republic. Most Iranians are Muslims and are concerned about their livelihood, and therefore, they do not care much about ancient times. Therefore, this approach of the opposition will not help create unity. The audience may accept the contradiction that the opposition focuses on and sometimes it may lead the government to take a defensive stance. However, it cannot create unity against the Islamic Republic. Although this conflict between Islamism and antiquity may be a sign of unity, the Islamic Republic deals with it at the same level (Khoei, 2020-21).

Using symbols of ancient Iran is a common method among opposition groups. One of these symbols is the symbol of Faravahar, which the foreign opposition prints on the Iranian flag and is believed to be a symbol of the 2,500-year-old civilization of ancient Iran. Other opposition groups use the “The Lion and Sun” symbol instead of Allah on the Iran flag. Opposition groups in international assemblies try to oppose the cultural policy of the Islamic Republic and its symbols. Of course, the Islamic Republic also uses all of its capacity to deal with them (Sabbaghian Bidgoli, 2020-21).

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<sup>38</sup> A Persian satellite TV channel headquartered in London. The financial supporters of this channel are unknown and have not been revealed. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes the supporters of this channel are the governments of the United Kingdoms and Saudi Arabia.

**9. Is celebrating ancient events and symbols in contrast with the thoughts of the Islamic Revolution? Will such actions result in weakening and support loss for the Islamic civilization and the Islamic Republic? (Is honoring “Cyrus the Great” considered an act against the Revolution?)**

It should be noted that such action is not in contrast with the Islamic Republic but other independent behaviors result in such opposition (Dabirinejad, 2020-21).

Note that using such events for our cause is harmful. This will prevent us from using our cultural, artistic, and economic capacities, which are inherently valuable. The same thing happened to the Tomb of Cyrus and created sensitivity (Fadaei, 2020-21).

Honoring these things has no confrontation with the Islamic Republic. But the enemies of the Islamic Republic (people who gather in Pasargadae<sup>39</sup> on “Cyrus the Great Day”, some of whom have no knowledge or information about ancient Iran) use this opportunity as a symbol of fighting against the Islamic Republic. Most of those who abuse the symbol of Cyrus as the symbol of unity are advocates of the monarchy. This group is the counterpoint of the Islamic Republic (Firoozi, 2020-21).

Of course, the Islamic Republic’s action against the gatherings on Cyrus the Great Day in Pasargadae is not something that will damage the monument or negatively affect the preservation and restoration of this structure. The Islamic Republic rather prevents gathering near the tomb of Cyrus on the same day. About the symbol of Ahura Mazda, it must be mentioned that it is a religious symbol for the followers of Zoroastrianism. Although the opposition is abusing this symbol, many stores are selling the symbol in the country (Modaqiq, 2020-21).

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<sup>39</sup> Pasargadae was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire under the rule of Cyrus the Great (559–530 BCE), who ordered its construction and the location of his tomb. Today it is an archaeological site and one of Iran’s UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



The place of gathering changed from time to time, for example, The Tomb of Cyrus the Great, Babak Fort<sup>40</sup>, etc. The main issue is the current situation of society. During the recent Iranian presidential election (2021), Mohsen Mehralizadeh one of the candidates in the election said:

“Society is managed in a way that the smallest issue within the country turns into a social crisis and then a political crisis. The political crisis will lead to the misuse of cultural heritage by the opposition group; in other words, misuse of the civilization. Associations and groups should be entrusted with these events and they should not be opposed. In the end, people will do what they want to do.” (Ajlou, 2020-21)

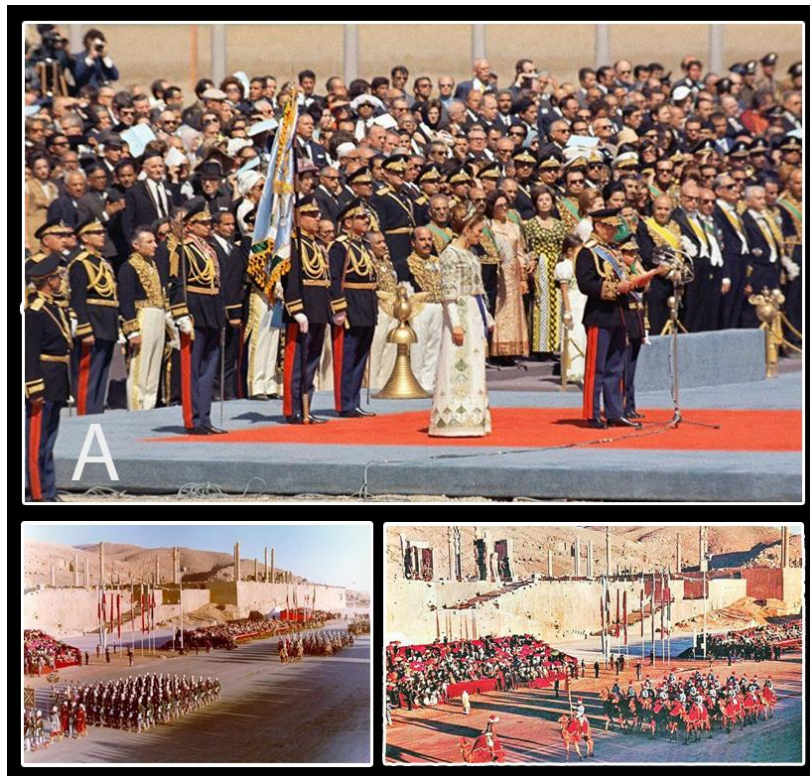
It seems that celebrating ancient events and symbols oppose the dogmas of the Islamic Revolution. All the slogans and actions of the Islamic Republic are focusing on Islam and Islamic rituals, based on which the Islamic Republic was formed. Inside the ancient structures and symbols of Iran lies the ideology of the Iranian kingdoms and empires, and this contradicts the mindset of the leaders of the Islamic Republic. Hence, the government tries to prevent these matters from becoming the center of attention (Sabbaghian Bidgoli, 2020-21).

**10. How supportive of the ancient Iran civilization were the monarchies before the Islamic Republic of Iran? Has this affected the support of ancient Iran civilization from the Islamic Republic? (The issue here is Taghut and attempts of fighting with remaining relevant symbols)**

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<sup>40</sup> Babak fort was built during the Sasanian dynasty and borrows its name from Babak Khorramdin the leader of the fight against the Arab invaders.

During the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty, our ancient civilization was being supported and the 2500-year-old celebrations<sup>41</sup> (Fig 7) were being held for the continuation of the kingdom. In the Islamic Republic, no monarchy is celebrated, not even the kingdom of Artaxerxes II<sup>42</sup> who was famous for being an honest and just king (Razani, 2020-21).



*Figure 7: The 2,500-year celebration of the Persian Empire, The King and Queen of Iran hosts a large number of queens, kings, and presidents in Persepolis*

Archaic ideology was established against religion during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty. However, the Islamic Republic is established based on religion (Firoozi, 2020-21).

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<sup>41</sup> This is the name of a group of celebrations for the 2500 years of written history of monarchy in Iran held during the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi from the 12<sup>th</sup> until the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1971 in Persepolis. these celebrations were attended by the heads of states and kings of 69 countries to celebrate Iran's history and civilization.

<sup>42</sup> Artaxerxes II the eleventh king of Iran from the Sasanian dynasty was a man with a very strong will and in certain accounts (like the Shahnameh) he is regarded as righteous.

As mentioned earlier, the Islamic Republic considers itself opposed to monarchy and is the first non-monarchical government in Iran. However, since Safavid was a Shia-based government, the Islamic Republic makes an exception in this case. Hence, the difference between the Islamic Republic and the monarchy is clear. However, it must be noted that monarchies before Islam have been legitimate (Khoei, 2020-21).

The issue of Taghut-based governments and the conflict with their remaining signs is apparent in the approach of the Islamic Republic, but it is not officially.

The government was sensitive to this issue only for a short period after the Revolution. This issue is not that deep and important to affect macro-policies associated with ancient sites and regions. After the first decade of the Revolution, the Persepolis was being supported with the policies adopted by the government of the Islamic Republic, and several investments and credits were considered for this historical site (Fadaei, 2020-21).

The Islamic Republic and the Pahlavi government were two rival discourses. With the victory of the Iranian Revolution, the people destroyed the symbols of the crown, which was the sign of Pahlavi, however, this had nothing to do with ancient Iran. The crown was the symbol of the monarchical state of Iran. And to conclude Revolution means changing. Opposing any part of the Iranian civilization is not right. Whoever loves Iran must accept all of it. Iran is integrated with its ethnic groups and history and no part of this country can be eliminated (Modaqqiq, 2020-21).

Dabirinejad, the director of Malek Museum, pointed out that:

“We cannot say that the monarchy before the Islamic Republic of Iran only focused on archaism. This government also studied and worked on Islamic periods.”

The Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Marble Palace<sup>43</sup> are examples (Fig 8) during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty. Also, all historical periods can be observed during the 2500-year-old celebrations of the Persian Empire. Soldiers of Safavid, Seljuk, and other historical periods can be seen in these celebrations with different costumes and clothes. Before the Revolution, the Seljuk and Timurid periods were being shown on National Television but none of the mentioned periods can be seen on the Islamic Republic television. In this period, we can watch the production of a documentary about Persepolis. In general, we are not seeing black and white absolutist conduct in either era (Dabirinejad, 2020-21).



*Figure 8: The Marble Palace is a historic building and former royal residence in Tehran- Architect: Fathallah Firdaws, Engineer: Joseph Leon*

When we start studying the history of Iran after Islam, we can see that the glorious ancient heritage of Iran is not focused on as it deserves. Fortunately, historical monuments and sites were registered and the greatness of ancient Iran, especially the Achaemenid period and Cyrus the Great, was studied during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty. Islamic governments and caliphs were always at war and did not

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<sup>43</sup> The Marble Palace is a beautiful monument built by the order of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1934. It is said the order for building of this palace was given to show the power of the king. This monument was registered in June 20, 1978 as registration number 1606 as a cultural heritage of Iran. Later in 1976 this palace was turned into a museum to introduce Reza Shah and his work to the people and was termed the Pahlavi Museum. This museum was open until the revolution. After the revolution this palace was in the use of the Islamic Revolution Committees, Judicial system of Iran, and finally the Expediency Discernment Council. Until it was given to the Mostazafan Foundation from the Expediency Discernment Council in 2018 and in 2019 it turned to a museum named the museum of Iranian art for the public.

care much about the ancient Iranian civilization. It seems that the following factors resulted in a lack of focus on ancient Iran: Iran is a vast country, lacks sufficient knowledge of ancient times, and has illiterate people (Sabaghian Bidgoli, 2020).

## **Chapter 5: conclusion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In the next step of post-Fordism, the focus is on services instead of industrial production. When developed communities create wealth in this way, cultural, historical, and artistic heritage's importance increases significantly because all these resources have the potential to be used in services and their importance is increasing daily. These sources include historical sites and structures, deep-rooted historical traditions, rituals, historical-religious rituals and ceremonies, handicrafts, etc. These resources are becoming more important and can attract tourists, travelers, enthusiastic consumers of culture, etc., and generate wealth for countries. In recent decades, Turkey has become an important tourism center through proper investments and making suitable policies in the cultural sector. Through all the above-mentioned, Turkey achieved significant sustainable development.

### **5.2. What is the view of Islamic Republic society about Achaemenid civilization?**

After entering service-based post-industrial times, many countries of the world started to review their history and culture. In the new stage, identity formation against world culture for focus on the local culture and history results in national unity and community. On the other hand, this can lead to attracting tourists, more capital, and wealth generation. To this end, for achieving the determined goals special cultural policies must be adopted. Georg Hegel considers Iran and Iranians the first empire and the first nation in history.

Iran has a long history and civilization that can be divided into several categories. These groups are as follows, respectively: (1) civilizations of the Iranian Plateau before the Aryan race (Iran during the Stone and Metal period), (2) ancient Iran (Achaemenids, Parthians, and Sassanids), (3) Iran during the Islamic era (Seljuks, Ilkhanids, and Safavids), and (4) Contemporary Iran (Qajar, Pahlavi, and the Islamic Republic). In each era, there are other dynasties and groups but the most important ones are highlighted here. In these times, civilization, religion, culture, art, and customs experienced a great deal of change and transformed from one form to another or were intertwined mostly by intra-ethnic born changes or foreign invasions (Alexander the Great, Muslim Conquest of Persia, Mongols, etc.).

For achieving optimal results, we pay attention to the difference and similarities in culture, art, and religion. For example, the Achaemenid Empire is the sample government, and the Islamic Republic is the current government of Iran whose policy-making is the aim of this research. Shah was at the top of the Achaemenid hierarchy and monarchy was the ruling structure of the government. According to available documents, the Achaemenid Empire was established by Cyrus the Great at the same time as his conquest of the Medes and the subsequent conquest of Babylon in 539 BC. There was no form of government, such as democracy and republic, and the monarchy was the legitimate government. Many Achaemenid inscriptions and the Cyrus Charter mention the justice, fairness, and religiosity of the Achaemenid shahs. After studying clay tablets 44 from the Achaemenid period regarding the wages of workers, we can see a fair relationship between the ruler and the working class. This is while in the construction of structures, such as the Giza Necropolis, Assyrian, and Babylonian palaces workers were slaves forced to work.

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<sup>44</sup> These clay inscriptions have been temporarily given to the Chicago University and their translation was done in 1945 under the supervision of professor George Cameron.

However, the Islamic Republic opposes monarchy and is the first non-monarchy government in Iran. The Islamic Republic characterizes the period before its establishment with words, such as Taghut and cruelty. You can see this view by looking at Ayatollah Khamenei's notes<sup>45</sup> during his visit to Persepolis. The Islamic Republic considers itself the judge and savior of the Iranian people and refers to those before as tyrants. Although there are some exceptions, such as the kings of the Safavid dynasty. However, according to research and as mentioned earlier, Cyrus the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty, and Darius, one of the most powerful kings of this dynasty, were just and advocates of freedom.

Religion is another issue that needs to be addressed. As mentioned earlier, the people of Iran before Islam were followers of Zoroaster, believing in one god. Currently, a minority of Iranians follow Zoroastrianism, which is a recognized religion in the Islamic Republic. Various theories have been proposed about the history of Zoroastrianism and the period this religion belongs to. Some archaeologists believe that the first kings of the Achaemenid dynasty, namely Cyrus and Darius the Great, were not the worshipers of Zoroaster, however, the next kings of the Achaemenid dynasty were.

Some believe that the religion of Achaemenid kings was different from the people of that period and Zoroastrian teachings are dated back to the first days of the Achaemenid period. We are certain that Zoroastrianism experienced its peak during the reign of the Sassanid dynasty. According to the findings of this study, Achaemenids were not burying their dead people for various reasons, the most important of which is the principles of Zoroastrianism. However, Achaemenid kings were not like this and were buried in stone and soil either individually or along with

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<sup>45</sup> ... alongside it he has built a throne of power using his power and tyranny in order to climb it and add to his solitary reign of tyranny and as the tablets say one became the ruler of the many...

their families. Another reason mentioned in the inscriptions is the position of Ahuramazda, Mitra, and Anahita, who are written alongside each other. Therefore, Achaemenid kings believed in this trinity (multiple gods) and were worshipers of Mithraism. The existence of the common name “Ahura Mazda” and the practice of worshiping against fire in the Atashkadeh (fire temple), have made historians believe in this theory that both people and second-half kings of the Achaemenid Empire were the followers of Zoroastrianism.

Whether they are followers of Mithraism or Zoroastrianism, what matters is the Islamic Republic. Islam is the accepted religion in Iran, and Muslims believe in one God and they oppose Polytheism. Mithraism has no place in Iran. Even if we believe that the Achaemenids were followers of Zoroastrianism and worshiped the one God, people’s religion changed after the Muslim conquest of Persia during Sasanian Empire, and most people converted to Islam. Next, a branch of Islam, namely Shia, was grown in Iran. During the Safavid dynasty, Shia became the official religion of Iranians and only the minority of Iranians remained loyal to their previous religions, Zoroastrians and Sunni Islam. Although the Islamic Republic accepts Zoroastrians and Sunni Muslims, it considered them as a minority, and the government is based on Twelver Shiism. Also, the government believes that its mission is to expand the culture of Mahdism. The Islamic Republic is not opposing other religions and beliefs unless they are against the oneness of God, and the government considers Islam to be the supreme and perfect religion that God has given proof to it<sup>46</sup>.

After reviewing the contradiction with monarchy, the next matter is the contradiction in religion and beliefs during the Achaemenid period and the current views of the Islamic Republic. If Iranians won a battle and became the rulers of a region in any

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<sup>46</sup> Today I complete your religion for you and finish giving you my blessings and I choose Islam for you as your religion. *الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا... (٣)*



era, they would have tried to introduce their culture and art to the people of that region and tried to flourish it. On the other hand, if a dynasty or government in Iran was overthrown by war, Iranian culture, art, and religion would have survived but integrated with the culture, art, and religion of the invaders and new practices would have been formed. For this reason, Islam imitated the four-dimensional designs (Chahar Taq) of fire temples to build the mosques or the fire temples turned into mosques and the design of Islamic gardens are imitated from Iranian gardens in ancient times.

Architecture and some cultural matters only merged after the Muslims occupied Iran, not other elements like Nowruz, the Persian New Year, unlike Muslim Arab countries that consider Muharram as the first month. The ancient Iranians in their writings attribute the celebration of Nowruz to Jamshid, the pioneer king of Iran, and celebrate the first days of spring as the New Year.

This magnificent event was held annually during the Achaemenid period and is still held in the Islamic Republic, and even the opposition groups could not eliminate this celebration. If Nowruz collides with Muharram, the government and religious groups announce that there will not be any celebrations and it will be only a transition to The New Year (Nowruz). However, not all celebrations survived. Ordibeheshtgan (one of the 12 celebrations during ancient Iran), Tirgan, Mehregan, and Sepandārmazgān are all forgotten and only followers of Zoroastrianism celebrate them. These celebrations are replaced with Islamic ones, such as The Fajr Decade<sup>47</sup> (associated with the Iranian Revolution Victory), Birthdates of Shia Imam-s, and other Muslim holidays, such as Eid al-Adha and Muhammad's first revelation.

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<sup>47</sup> This is the 10 day known in the Islamic Republic as the Fajr decade and is from February 1-11, 1979 when Sayyid Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini came to Iran after 14 years of exile in 1<sup>st</sup> of February. Finally, after ten days the army declared it was not taking sides and the regime fell and the revolution occurred.

However, these are all desired by the Islamic Republic Government, and Iran's revolutionary and religious generations.

Another issue is that the ancient Iranians tended to create legends. Just look at Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. Rostam is a symbol of courage, bravery, chivalry, etc., and Twelvers also remember their first Imam, Ali with the attributes, such as bravery, courage, chivalry, etc. The Islamic Republic uses these symbols and attributes to establish a unity between the religion and being Iranian and to fill the gaps. These factors helped to bring together nationalists and religious people to stand bravely and valiantly for eight years against the invasion of Iraq in the Jang-e Tahmili (Imposed War). Finally, the Islamic Republic has used the art, civilization, culture, and myth of ancient Iran during some historical moments, such as war, foreign diplomacy or ethnic matters. There is a serious contradiction in the views of the Islamic Republic of Iran about ancient Iran about religion and form of government.

### **5.3. Ancient Iran or Islamic Iran**

There are many questions, the most important ones are the following ones:

“Is there any inherent contradiction between ancient Iran and Islam? What are Islamic Republic views about it?”

The Revolution in 1979 was Islamic and centered on Twelver Shiism. The Islamic Republic denies the past and announces the end of the monarchy in Iran by overthrowing the Pahlavi government, which tended to archaism and its elements (Achaemenid Empire). During the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty, there was a kind of intemperate behavior in the use of symbols, celebrations, and architecture of the Achaemenid period. In the first days of the Revolution, this situation created a serious confrontation between Islamic Iran and ancient Iran. The extremists opposed any symbol or sign associated with Pahlavi and ancient periods, and the people had revolutionary ideas. During this period, extremists eliminated the symbol of the

crown, which was the symbol of Pahlavi (imperial state) in buildings, and, some elements associated with ancient civilization and myths of ancient Iran. Moreover, Ferdowsi's tomb<sup>48</sup> was almost destroyed because ancient poems and myths in his book (Shahnameh) were written over his tomb, and also, the destruction of Persepolis was ordered. However, these destructive behaviors declined after the first decade of the Revolution and political and economic matters in society took precedence over cultural issues. The revolutionist Muslim people of the Islamic Republic were fighting a war for a decade and then, sanctions were imposed for several decades, therefore, the matter of livelihood took precedence over marginal issues gradually, e.g., the contradiction between ancient Iran and Islam. On the other hand, the government has focused more on the Shiites around the world and advertising Shiism and its revolution. The government considered Shiites of the region as a single nation and has provided them with financial and spiritual support. In this regard, the holy tombs of Shia Imams in Iraq and Syria are restored and protected by them. Also, the government became less sensitive to the contradiction between Islam and ancient Iran years after the early years of the revolution. Hence, an opportunity was provided to study the ancient part of Iran and to preserve and restore antiquities.

In the plans for the next five years, we can see that the government's focus on cultural heritage and tourism has increased to the sixth plan. This matter reached its peak in the sixth plan. However, it is imperative to mention that the budget allocated to cultural heritage and tourism, and cultural monuments of the Islamic period is more than the budget for the ancient heritage, and there is a lack of significant balance and the cultural heritage of Islamic civilization has been emphasized more. Iran has become a container for Islam in the last 14 centuries. Hence, we cannot

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<sup>48</sup> A poet in the 4<sup>th</sup> century of the Islamic calendar

easily distinguish between Iran and Islam. Also, we cannot deny and eliminate the long history of the ancient and monarchist part of Iran. The best way to protect this heritage is to eliminate the extremist and moderate views of both the Pahlavi period and the Islamic Republic.

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi started to make changes without building up to it when most of the rural and traditional families believed in the Shia religion and were not yet familiar with Western culture. Although this change began during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, its peak time was during the reign of Mohammad Reza and at the end of his reign. During his reign, the 2500-year-old anniversary of the monarchy was being celebrated and archeology was discussed, whose main symbol was the Achaemenid Empire. The influence of art and civilization from the Achaemenid period can be seen in architecture, art, national identity, and even in the designs of the national money. On the other hand, the absence of religion and religious symbols in government ceremonies can be sensed but people at that period had their religious ceremonies. This focus of Pahlavi on the Achaemenid period caused the revolutionists to disagree with this part of Iranian history after the revolution. The Islamic extremists decided to destroy everything they considered to be the manifestation of Taghut, just like the Muslim conquest of Persia. Note that this was not an easy thing to do since people were highly aware of the importance of cultural heritage. However, neglecting some monuments resulted in the destruction and theft of some monuments of ancient Iran. The importance of this view decreases by a decrease in revolution excitement.

#### **5.4. One's self and the other**

The Islamic Republic is a newly established government and has experienced ups and downs for a few decades. One of the main duties of the organizations in the Islamic Republic of Iran is to deal with cultural conflicts with the help of cultural

security, by generating and re-generating the values of the Islamic Revolution. The Islamic Republic believes that cultural security is protecting the values extracted from Islamic Revolution and securing them against various internal and external invasions. As a result, conservatism is the decision during frightening situations. In these situations, less initiative will be taken in the cultural decisions and there will be a tendency to identify and eliminate threats.

The opposition of the Islamic Republic consciously uses the symbols of the Achaemenid Empire as a uniting factor and a symbol of the fight against the Islamic Republic. Only the monarchy supporters were using this approach at first but later other groups started using it. The opposition recognizes the pre-Islamic approach and believes that the current problems of the society are caused by the Islamic society. The problem starts in this confrontational approach. In other words, this pre-Islamic and post-Islamic separation is damaging the integrity of Iranian civilization. The use of symbols of ancient Iran in contrast to Islamic symbols creates an aggressive situation for the leaders of the government of the Islamic Republic who may not have enough information about these signs and symbols.

The views of the opposition living outside of the country have been passed on to those living in Iran, and they are protesting in another way by honoring the historical events. For example, people are traveling to Persepolis to gather around the Tomb of Cyrus on Cyrus the Great Day<sup>49</sup>. Due to the conditions and problems of the Islamic Republic, people start chanting slogans against the government. During the first years of this event, security forces were dealing with these gatherings and after a couple of years, the government ordered to prevent the gatherings on the tomb of Cyrus. Generally, this event does not oppose the Islamic Republic, but the marginal

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<sup>49</sup> Cyrus the great entered Babylon on October 29, 539 BC and freed the Jewish prisoners. Cyrus day is not registered on the official calendar. This day is not the birthday of Cyrus but rather a day to honor him.

matters, which are creating the conflict, have generated these sensitivities. The behavior of the protesters creates nothing but more reaction from the government to the antiquities of Iran. Now, the government is taking countermeasures by preventing the gathering of people on the Cyrus in the Great Day in Persepolis, and this may bring less support for antiquities in the future, resulting in more damage to this ancient monument. Currently, Pasargadae International Base continues to operate in the Islamic Republic on its budget. However, these forms of protest may change the government's approach, since these monuments are not honored, introduced to the world, or utilized for economic purposes. Of course, some believe that this view of the government has caused the world to focus more on this day, and this is a kind of advertisement and introduction. However, this method does not lead to economic exploitation, preservation, and increased visits to this place.

## **5.5. Policy-making, Rules, and Cultural Organizations in the Islamic Republic**

In idealistic policy-making, culture is driven towards uniformity and there is an image of the superiority of the culture within based on which values, norms, and behaviors in the social arena are designed. Positive tips about the policies of the Islamic Republic, based on which cultural planning is carried out are mercifulness, perfectionism, idealism, justice, knowledge-seeking, production, and the power of faith in the creation of spiritual values. Although the Islamic Republic has not yet been able to achieve these ideals, the lack of suitable planning has led to opposite results. On the other hand, a governmental culture is a negative approach in the Islamic Republic. In addition, the strategy here is the unification of culture and the suppression of subcultures aimed at controlling the culture. This approach has certain consequences, for example, it directs the society towards political order instead of a cultural one. In the Islamic Republic, culture is limited to religion and religious affairs to Shia culture. In ideological policy-making, components, such as

worldview, values, norms, and institutions form cultural policy. These components constitute the macro-strategic policy affairs in the field of culture. However, it must be noted that religion is just 1% of culture.

As it can be understood from the nature of the Islamic Republic's name, the government thinks based on religion, and the growth of the pre-Islam civilization will result in the condemnation of the Islamic Republic. Therefore, the ancient civilization is not highlighted, and sometimes not supported. The policy-making system in the Islamic Republic of Iran begins with Iran's Constitution as the basis for lawmaking. After that, a series of official documents reflect the policies of the government. The first document is the Perspective Document approved and announced by the Supreme Leader. This document contains the general policies of the government. However, it is not a law book and needs to be approved by the Iranian Parliament as a legal bill. The next step is rules associated with the budget that determines the executive credit of the plan. Next, the plan is implemented by the executive organizations.

### **5.5.1. The Policymaking core**

In the hierarchy of cultural decision-making in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is a top-to-bottom design, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution is the next superior authority after the Supreme Leader that is tasked with policy-making, orientation, decision-making, coordination, and management of cultural, educational and research affairs within the framework of government general policies. The first cultural plan of Iran after the Islamic Revolution was prepared in 1992-93 and was titled Cultural Principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran and approved by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. The cultural policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the same as the policy of the Islamic Revolution. In other words, Islamic culture is the basis and foundation of all individual and social conduct in

Iran. In this council, actions and rules associated with the Islamic culture and art are approved frequently. However, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution has not explicitly and definitively addressed a clause or situation about pre-Islamic Iran. This Council is tasked with supervising and coordinating the implementation of cultural policies. Due to its ideological nature, which aims to promote revolutionary and Islamic culture, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution believes that its direct duty is to make a revolutionary change in culture and align the subject of culture with the revolution and Islamic ideals.

A study of the acts approved by the Council of the Cultural Revolution shows that this council is indifferent to matters, such as the ancient heritage of Iran, especially the ancient heritage of the Achaemenid Empire, or shows no attention at all. The reason is that the ancient heritage and the related culture have some differences with the culture defined by the government. Hence, most of the activities of this Council are based on Islam and revolution.

In the lower levels of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, the hierarchy is defined as follows: The Islamic Consultative Assembly, Vice-President for Strategic Oversight, Public Culture Council, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism, and Finally, the Cultural Office (Vice-Supervisor of the Supreme Leader and Cabinet of Iran). If the mentioned ministries oversee cultural and artistic affairs in Iran, we should pay attention to their views, laws, and goals.

### **5.5.2. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting**

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting is another organization that is as influential in the Islamic Republic as a ministry in cultural, artistic, and other matters. Generating policies with cultural content, aimed at using historical and cultural heritage to achieve a national consensus and establishing cultural identity,



can also be an important step towards cultural development. By gathering all the marginal discourses, we can bring about unity and national identity. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting's mission is to serve the Islamic Revolution, and hence, it produces guidance, education, news, and entertainment programs. Meanwhile, only a small portion of the produced materials are associated with historical and cultural heritage, which is mostly shown on domestic channels.

International networks of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (PressTV - English, Hispan TV - Spanish, Al-am and Al-Kowsar, and Arabic) have focused on Islam and revolution. This has created a unipolar atmosphere in society and distanced itself from national consensus and unity. However, they always have their audience, namely the religious and revolutionary audiences. Another important issue is that this organization belongs to the government and there is no private television. The government seems to be concerned that private television may oppose the ideology of the Islamic Republic. In recent years, Internet TV and social networks have caused National Television to lose its fame among people. The government's fear came true and these media have produced content opposing the ideology of the Islamic Republic. With the help of technology, this situation has provided an opportunity for anti-government groups to use ancient symbols and signs that are not seen at all on national television to create unity between themselves and the people.

## **5.6. The status of cultural heritage in the organizations in charge of the cultural affairs; a critical reading**

The main cultural body in terms of influence and power of formulating and supervising the execution of policies is the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. This body is responsible for supervising and making adequate coordination in executing the cultural policies. However, this body abides by the ideological and idealist approach in cultural policy-making. The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution considers its immediate revolutionary goal to make a

revolutionary transformation in the culture and align culture with the revolutionary and Islamic ideals. However, it seems that this council has not been very successful with this general idea. The performance of this body shows that most of its acts are connected with the election or confirmation of the cultural representatives in different bodies or with the reform, change, or amendment of the previous acts. A very small number of acts address the establishment of new cultural foundations and bodies and the rest of the acts are also related to micro cultural policy-making.

The study of the acts approved by the Council of the Cultural Revolution indicates the indifference to or ignorance about Iran's ancient legacy on the part of this council. Considering the ideological nature of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution whose aim is to promulgate revolutionary and Islamic culture, little attention is paid to the important issue of cultural heritage, especially the ancient heritage remaining from the Achaemenid Empire. Because it is assumed that the ancient heritage and the synonymous culture are much different from the cultural line followed by the Islamic Republic. On the other hand, the overemphasis on the idea of cultural influence makes the ancient culture be considered as a threat to the Islamic culture by being turned into a pretext by western cultures.

However, this requires a fundamental revision. Because the attention to the ancient heritage will bring about some considerable economic and cultural achievements for the present ruling class and its cultural system in the country. In this regard, one of the recent notable actions of the council is the approval of an act under the Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Handicrafts becomes a member of the Coordinating Headquarters of Cultural Engineering Map. This issue can be the cultural heritage promising greater attention to this heritage.

Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is the second organization whose orientation towards cultural heritage should be studied. The study into the main goals of this ministry indicates the lack of goals concerning this heritage. The notable goals of this ministry are the following:

Cultural independence and the security of the society against the cultural influence of foreign countries, propagation of Islamic culture and art, global awareness of the fundamentals and goals of the Islamic Republic. In this regard, there are three ideas of countering the cultural invasion, giving priority to the Islamic culture, and exporting the revolutionary culture.

This inattention to the ancient heritage on the part of a ministry that is the main cultural body in the country is very significant. In this regard, the lack of objectivist policy-making and following an idealist and ideological policy-making can be considered as a fundamental reason for this inattention while an objectivist approach will undoubtedly focus on the huge potential of ancient heritage as a possibility for the development of culture and economy of culture.

Meanwhile, two duties described for this ministry are developing and utilizing Iran and world tourism installations of any type, and also interacting and providing the necessary means for the individual and group trips made by Iranian and foreign tourists in Iran. Planning to create, reform, and complete tourism installations through direct investment and granting loans to the private sectors or cooperating with them. Though there is no obvious mention of the ancient heritage as a possibility for Iran and world tourism, this opens up an opportunity for the ministry authorities to pay more attention to this heritage.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting as another authority in charge of cultural issues in the Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys a great power of cultural influence

especially among the lower social class due to its public and inclusive nature in the society and its extensive access. A glance at the goals and policies of this organization shows that the organization has emphasized the native Islamic culture and content generation to counter the cultural influence of the western world as its priorities. However, a review of two basic principles and policies of this organization is notable:

The attempt to substitute the value system of Islam for the value system of eastern and western countries and the fight against the impacts remaining from the Taghuti culture” and “The attempt to speed up the cultural revolution and the return to the original Islamic Identity.

A greater reflection on these two principles shows that the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting is not willing to address the issue of ancient cultural heritage and content generation. The first principle shows that the Islamic Republic of Iran considers its value system as the third substitution for the cultural systems of eastern and western countries, and it has also adopted the policy of countering the remaining culture of the previous ruling dynasties by calling them Taghut. Although in the second principle, the idea of returning to the original self is tenable, it cannot be very useful because of denying a fundamental aspect of ancient history. In general, it should be said that the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting has not given priority to the attention to ancient heritage and content generation.

Islamic Development Organization and Endowment and Charity Organization are two other organizations operating as cultural authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. These two organizations, as their names suggest, do their utmost to propagate and preserve Islamic and Shia culture. Thus, the ancient cultural heritage issue is to a large extent outside the purview of them (they cover the Endowment and Charity

Organization and Islamic cultural heritage). A glance at the principles and duties of Islamic Development Organization like Showing people and especially the young people the way to counter the enemies of Islam, Defending the principles of Islam, the holy system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and recognition of the cultural and promotional conspiracies of the foreign countries, Conducting research and investigating the destructive publicity and cultural invasion of the enemies, etc. indicate the dominance of the ideological attitude in the macro approaches of the organization and the propagation of the duality of familiar discourse against the foreign discourse in some forms, such as cultural invasion, the influence of foreign culture, etc. This approach cannot naturally interact with other cultures because of avoiding the logic of dialogue. However, one of the items among the goals pursued by this organization is the religious development of people both qualitatively and quantitatively and the development of national traditions in Iran can prove noteworthy. Paying attention to the national traditions by this proposition can offer the policy-makers and relevant agents the possibility of making a connection between religious traditions and ancient national traditions and their heritage.

However, the endowment organization places the main emphasis on the preservation of the holy sites as a part of the religious and cultural heritage. Though the ancient heritage has not been considered as one of the duties and functions of this organization, the attention of the organization (of Islamic heritage) to the cultural heritage per se is important and valuable, and it can play a considerable role in the cultural and economic development.

Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research are one of the reputed and old bodies in the field of culture. Although there is no direct mention of the cultural heritage in the general functions and policies of this organization, there are some paragraphs in it like the development of cultural affairs at the social level through

the cooperation between Howzeh and universities and other cultural authorities and bodies, especially for the young generation, in the list of the organization's duties making this issue interpretable. In this paragraph, some issues can be concluded directly considering the emphasis on policy-making to strengthen the unity and overlap between Howzeh and universities. Considering the scientific and objectivist approach of the university, receiving help from this modern and progressive body can prepare some grounds for the attraction of attention to the ancient cultural heritage. For example, Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research can attract the attention softly and indirectly through economic investment. For example, holding scientific seminars and workshops, preparing booklets and brochures and useful and effective publicity for the ancient cultural heritage can be some of the functions of this body that can be operationalized.

Another body in charge of cultural affairs is the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization. This organization considers its main function as forming relationships between the Islamic communities and propagating revolutionary and Islamic values among other nations. Considering the title and name of this organization and its duties, it can be much expected to operate in the field of ancient cultural heritage and to propagate it. Some of the paragraphs like Extending and enhancing the cultural relations with different nations and ethnicities, especially the Muslim countries to do cultural exchanges and to provide Islamic culture and civilization correctly, Explaining the moral, intellectual, and social transformations originating from the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and Making policies and coordinating all cultural and promotional overseas, in the charter and goals pursued by this organization clarify the general approach of this organization to culture. Exporting the revolution and Islamic values from Iran to other Muslim nations is a basic

principle of most of the duties described for this organization clarifying its position as an ideological and idealist body.

Some other cultural bodies executing the cultural policies in Iran are two bodies known as Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly and the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought. These two bodies that consider their main mission as the propagation of the Shia culture and creation of Islamic unity among different denominations cannot be the media to propagate Iran's ancient heritage. The main goal of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought has been described as Familiarizing Islamic scholars and thinkers around the world and broadening their understanding of economic, religious jurisprudent, and social, political affairs and coordinating and establishing a single front based on the axiomatic Islamic principles against the foreign conspiracies. In this paragraph, considering the mention of the resistance to the foreign conspiracies, the cultural invasion can be pointed out once more and many of the political bodies in the Islamic Republic of Iran abide by this idea. The result of this approach is the resistance to intercultural dialogue at the international level which leads to political and cultural isolation. The final result of such a condition is the undiscovered exceptional potential of Iran in terms of ancient culture.

Islamic Republic News Agency is another cultural body with considerable power to influence cultural affairs. Considering the special potential of this organization and its extensive range of performance both inside and outside Iran, it has the potential to create better conditions to present the huge cultural potential, that is, Iran's cultural heritage by providing the news and information relating to the field of cultural heritage and in particular the ancient heritage. However, the present performance of this organization indicates that it is mainly like and is eager to cover the political and ideological news to advance some concepts, such as the maximum

exportation of revolution and Islam and to counter the intelligence influence of foreign countries. The National Library of Iran can be evaluated as another cultural body in Iran. In the description of duties and objectives of this organization, some paragraphs like Collecting journals and national heritage, and Collecting foreign journals on national heritage can open up some opportunities for useful interpretations of the national resources and heritage. The National Library of Iran is a body with a more scientific, objective, and non-ideological approach concerning many other bodies because of being closer to the academic institutes. This organization can open up the possibility of better presentation and recognition of these resources and capacities by propagating and promoting the scientific resources about Iran's ancient culture, in particular, that of the Achaemenid Empire, if the organization is managed.

The performance of the Coordination Council for Islamic Propagation and the goals can be discussed and examined. This council is supervised by the representative of the supreme leader in cooperation with the Islamic Revolution Foundation and different institutions mainly operating in the promotional, communicative, cultural, and informative fields. As the title of this council suggests, the Islamic promotion and propagation and whatever is connected with the Islamic civilization and culture are given priority by the organization. Therefore, setting goals to address ancient cultural heritage is outside the purview of the organization, as most of the cultural bodies operating in the Islamic Republic of Iran have been designed and formed ideologically and with some intra-discursive titles with religious goals.

In general, the study of the policy-making cultural bodies executing cultural affairs in the Islamic Republic of Iran clarifies some fundamental points according to their duties, goals, and performance of these bodies. The first point suggests that these cultural bodies generally abide by an idealist and ideological approach in making



and executing the policies. In this approach, the policies must be formulated and the goals must be set to approach and achieve an abstract ideal. This approach does not rely on the objective and observable realities but gains an ideal and abstract totality at the expense of losing objectivity and details. All cultural bodies of the Islamic Republic of Iran have generally put promotion, propagation, publicity, and generalization of the Islamic, Shia, and revolutionary ideology on the agenda, and they have paid little attention to the intercultural interaction, historical and cultural background, the heritage remaining from the past, etc.

The other noteworthy point depending on the same ideological attitude is the issue of exporting Islam, revolution, and the values of the Islamic Revolution. The critical and analytic study of the duties and objectives of most of the above-mentioned cultural bodies show that since these bodies address global and international activities, they are most willing to introduce Iran's revolutionary culture and the original and pure Islam to the world; therefore, they do not pay much attention to other potentials of the country while recent philosophical and sociological theories have shown that the cultures are neither original nor pure, but they are created as a result of the intercultural interactions and the actions and reactions among the cultures. Thus, the Iranian identity and culture result from the interaction and combination of Islamic culture with the ancient Iranian culture, and it is not possible to ignore one of these cultures.

The third point addresses the idea of countering cultural influence and invasion by western and foreign countries. Islamic revolution has considered itself right from the beginning as the third way or the substitution for the two dominant approaches, namely communism and liberalism dominating the eastern and western countries. The great emphasis on being independent of eastern and western countries led to the introduction of the concepts of cultural invasion and influence by the eastern and

western worlds seeking to damage the new third way right from the beginning of the Islamic Revolution. Following this issue, the concept of familiar discourse vs foreign discourse was proposed which led to the political and cultural delineations. As the concept of psychology of fear showed, the psychological structure of the ruling system fears the invasion and destruction imposed by other cultures. This is the case while the present cultural studies show that the cultures are not some isolated systems or physical packages, but they are so fluid and interactive that continuously affect each other through mutual interaction.

The consequence of the idea of cultural invasion accompanied by the psychology of fear is that one of the greatest cultural resources and potentials of ancient Iran is in particular the heritage of the glorious Achaemenid Empire that sank into oblivion. It slipped into oblivion because it has been always assumed that addressing this heritage and paying attention to the positive results it provides would weaken Islamic culture and civilization. The reason for this fear stems from this assumption that the ancient culture noted and cherished by the western culture originates from the same root the western culture originates from and addressing it means playing in the game plotted by the western politics. On the other hand, the governments in the Pahlavi period considered themselves as the heir to Iran's ancient kingdom. This could also be another factor contributing to the inattention of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the civilization of Iran's ancient kingdom while now the political opposition to the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the culture of Iran's ancient kingdom as the familiar and native culture and considers the Islamic one as a stranger and foreign.

### **5.7. Various Fields Such As Politics, Sports, and Art**

Any country can use the capacity of political, sports, and artistic fields to support and introduce its civilization and cultural heritage. In the past, Persian-speaking poets, especially Ferdowsi, used Persian poetry to introduce the civilization of

ancient Iran and mythology in the best manner possible. This literature and poetry have done their share for ancient heritage. Currently, the Islamic Republic has progressed in technology and various artistic fields and can present the history of ancient Iran to all people in Iran and around the world by producing movies, animations, computer games, etc.

The Islamic Republic can better introduce the ancient civilization of Iran by using ancient names, paintings, and symbols in various festivals. For example, Simorgh as the mythical bird of Iran was used as the statue of the Fajr International Film Festival (Fig 9). The government can use the capacity of the political field of festivals, conferences, and seminars associated with the subject of ancient Iran and archeology, to introduce and inform the people in Iran and around the world.



*Figure 9: Simorgh is a mythical bird a symbol and statue of the Fajr Film Festival*

The responsibility for the foreign sector can be assigned to cultural advisers who are residing in the Iranian embassies although cultural advisors are working only on the revolution and the advertisement of Shia culture and the teachings of Persian literature with revolution-based concepts. This is because the cultural advisers are selected by the Islamic Advertisement Organization.

In the fields of museology and international relations, the Museum of Ancient Iran has been a good example and had many exchanges with other museums around the world. This museum has sometimes transferred its monuments to other countries to introduce the ancient civilization of Iran.

Related to identity documents, the use of images belonging to the Achaemenid civilization on movable and immovable monuments can be effective. For example, images of ancient and Islamic places in Iran can be printed on the new versions of Iranian passports, however, the images of Islamic places are prevailing. Ancient symbols and signs that have not been used before can also be printed on Iranian banknotes (Fig 10). Of course, the image of Persepolis has been used on 100,000 Toman banknotes. It should be noted that around the civilization of Iranshahr and Greater Iran regions, countries, such as Uzbekistan printed the images belonging to the Achaemenid period on their national money (Fig 11).



Figure 10: Islamic Republic of Iran currency Images Most of the pictures are related to the buildings and tombs of the Islamic period



Figure 11 : 100,000 Toman Iran's banknotes (the image of Persepolis) the image of a bracelet which is completed by figures of mythical animals (Achaemenid period) with wings has been used on 100 so'm banknotes, Uzbekistan



Money and passports are national and international documents and among the best options for introducing ancient monuments. The Pahlavi dynasty’s approach to printing banknotes (Fig 12) was different from the Islamic Republic and no Islamic structures were used. In other words, this is just like overdoing and undergoing something and shows that we conflict with ourselves.



*Figure 12: Iran currency Images (during the Pahlavi dynasty) Most of the pictures are related to the designs and buildings of ancient Iran*

Another significant matter is the use of sports and games. As we know, sport should be kept away from politics, but at the same time, it can be a good collaborator for culture. The use of signs and designs in the clothes of athletes of a country and the logo of famous sports teams can be effective in introducing the cultural heritage of that country, both for the people in the country and abroad. One of these teams is Persepolis, which is one of the most popular football teams in Iran and Asia. The team was renamed “Pirouzi” after the revolution. Also, Taj is another popular football club in Iran, whose name was changed to Esteghlal. Now, after decades of effort, Persepolis has obtained its original name (Fig 13).

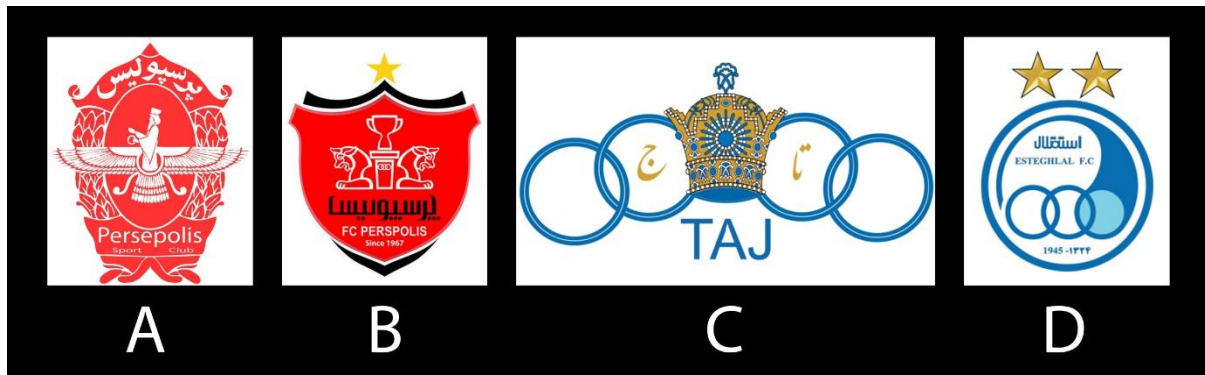


Figure 13: A-Persepolis Sports Club's Logo before the Islamic Revolution B- Persepolis Sports Club's Logo after the Islamic Revolution C- Esteghlal(taj) Sports Club's Logo before the Islamic Revolution D- Esteghlal(taj) Sports Club's Logo after the Islamic Revol

## 5.8. Different governmental approaches from the revolution up to the end of the 12th presidency

One cannot separate the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) from its different presidencies and political wings. Cabinet and wing policies align with IRI's ideas, concepts, and infrastructure. Regardless of the holistic policies of the state, different cabinets have variable relations between the government and policymaking. For example, in the reformist presidency supervision was minimal while in the conservative presidencies there was maximal policymaking. The reformist presidency was led by president Sayyid Mohammad Khatami in which special attention was paid to NGOs in the domain of cultural heritage. This presidency's actions led to the registration of many cultural heritage sites and their repair and protection including Islamic and ancient monuments. During Mr. Ahmadinejad's presidency, less attention was paid to NGOs. In this cabinet, the chief of the cultural heritage ministry, Mr. Rahim Mashaei attempted to establish ancient Iran as an important matter in society which was blocked due to disagreement with the state's overall status. Mr. Rohani's cabinet's attention to cultural heritage increased organizations.

Regardless of each presidency's approaches, in the first years of the revolution when the country was in a sensitive situation, less attention was paid to the repair and maintenance of historic and ancient monuments. After time passed and the country

became stable more attention was paid to the repair and maintenance of historic remnants whether Islamic or ancient. Finally, integration of the cultural heritage organization with tourism and handicraft in the shape of a ministry is a sign of this attention. This change from an organization to a ministry shows increased sovereignty for the repair and maintenance of historic remnants.

### **6.8.1. The private sector**

The IRI does not have a positive outlook on NGOs and private organizations. This has caused private sectors to become weaker and the private cultural sector to suffer more. Governmental budgets that are allocated for the promotion of values have consequences, such as superficiality, popularism, and hypocrisy in society. The government has become undisputed in the context of economic rent related to cultural sectors including the cultural heritage sector. Therefore, for operating a site one must have close relations with the government and the groups that license and also with governmental supervisors for repair and maintenance. These circumstances have a little financial benefit for private sectors and NGOs which leads to discouragement from investment. Therefore, in these circumstances we only have limited NGOs that are licensed and only operate at a level of reporting, criticizing, and advising concerning Cultural heritage attempts.

## **6.9. The cultural policymaking challenges of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

-Shortage of specialized human resources must believe in the policy that is going to be executed by them and be highly specialized and capable.

-Multiplicity of social preferences in the domain of culture.

-Rejection of foreign cultural policymaking models. This is while these management criteria come from well-thought people. These criteria are usually accepted by the scientific community and are standard internationally. The IRI insists on maintaining



its ideology. It is best to develop new propensities but sadly we have not had success in this domain or at least do not know how to proceed towards it. It is noteworthy that this matter is a contributing reason to our low tourism attraction.

- Lack of coordination in cultural executive bodies that causes parallel and reworking.
- Lack of research and out-of-date information and required statistics in the domain of culture and art.
- A big portion of the cultural activities is governmental and private sectors also depend heavily on the government. This means the government is the axis of planning and execution.
- Policymaking is a tool for reaching a goal, ideal, or value.
- IRI's cultural policies are based on a wide general explanation of culture and cultural activities. The generality of this policy causes a lack of orientation and the intervention of the government in all domains.
- Lack of coordination between cultural planning and economic, political, and social planning domains.
- Lack of an organized body for evaluation, and indexes and standards for evaluating performances in the cultural sector.
- Governmental cultural budgets are lower than industry, services, commerce, and political sectors. This budget which is allocated in Iran as the budget of cultural planning and budgeting is mostly spent on organizational maintenance on governmental organizations and personnel and less on policymaking for operational planning. Therefore, the government seems weak in the orientation of serious cultural matters.

## **6.10. Applicable suggestions**

The IRI will enter a new era of interactions with the west after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action which promises economic and political interactions. Considering we are in the service and post-industrial era, attention to certain cultural affairs can lay the grounds for economic and political usage of cultural heritage from ancient Iran especially the Achaemenid era.

In natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering we use knowledge from the west and east and localize them. Otherwise, we mimic them exactly, and if we do not know, like nuclear energy, we succumb to trial and error to become a technologically advanced country. Following a similar approach, it is better to use and heed western and eastern methods and techniques in humanities and cultural affairs; just like we always reproduce the cultures of other countries within ourselves. Currently, we either do not know about reproduction, or we cannot achieve it even with the knowledge. Or we have the knowledge and capacity and do not want to do it and we are just miring in non-fulfillment. To sum up, this issue will be solved when the IRI feels the need to change certain approaches in its constitution and creates said changes. For example, although mandatory hijab is not enforced with strictness for foreign tourists, its very existence in the law deters many tourists and tourism companies from approaching Iran's Islamic and ancient heritages. If this matter turns into a cultural interaction and respect for other religious beliefs and people, it will have a very positive reflection and we will immediately see its effect in the tourism industry.

Another issue is that the Middle East has been war-stricken for a very long time. IRI has been stable and safe after the imposed Iraq-Iran war through strengthening its military. This is while international agreements like the JCPA have created new possibilities in political cooperation with our neighbors and western countries and this requires reconsideration of some of our ideals and mottoes. It seems that initial

steps have been taken on this matter. These essential issues that are in the background of this research are acquired by the researcher's knowledge of the social and political nature of Iran's society. Therefore, it is important to apply these concepts for maintenance, repair, introduction, and exploitation to the economic and cultural aspects of Iran's ancient and Islamic heritages.

### **5.10.1 Approaches**

- We must minimize disputes between Islam and ancient heritage concepts. The best approach is for the education system to reflect upon and start culture building in the initial years of school. Care must be taken to avoid singly showcasing a religion, ethnic group, concept and creating polarization. And further, tend to Islamic Iran, ancient Iran as much as the revolution and its outlooks. This will cause different thinking processes to take place alongside each other and for conversation to replace conflict. It is noteworthy that achieving this can be through attending to the language and culture of different ethnic groups in school books as a unifying agent among these different groups so that a single group or thinking method is not singled out. At the next step, the education system must tend to culture building and protection of cultural heritage so that every Iranian feels responsible for the protection of their cultural heritage and actively participates in their protection because of knowing its inherent and economic value. Sadly this lack of knowledge has caused some youths to engrave mementos on them with sharp metallic tools due to ignorance. This process will take time but the sooner it starts the better. In Persian, there is a proverb that says: Whenever you prevent the loss, it will be a gain.
- Foreign oppositions and internal protesters must know that mentioning cultural heritage and using it in protests as a symbol and a unifying agent in

protests only makes right-wing extremists that disagree with ancient Iran persist further in disagreeing with its repair, maintenance, and advertisement. It is best to separate politics and culture and stop this confrontation between the Islamic Iran and ancient Iran to see a holistic approach towards the country. This is while in Iran economic matters are becoming bolder and the reason that the cultural heritage is ignored is not the confrontation of Islamic and ancient Iran but people's livelihoods. Regardless, the monarchy advocates and foreign residents use ancient Iranian symbols in contrast to the Islamic Republic's government which is useless. Therefore, it is advised that both sides should keep the ancient cultural heritage and Islamic cultural heritage out of their disagreement.

- In the 2025 Perspective Document of Iran, as the most important document for the development of Iran in the last decade which will guide legislation based on its content, no mention of cultural heritage, tourism, and its surrounding concepts has been made. A lack of attention to cultural heritage and tourism in the 2025 Perspective Document of Iran which is a high-ranking document of the country will approach cultural policy making in the sector of cultural heritage harder than ever. The fact that Iran was a single product exporter of oil and its derivatives and dependent on them up until recently boldens the need for the tourism sector in Iran. Many countries have developed their tourism industry and subsequently reached their economic development's stability or have reached near stability. The quantitatively and qualitatively extensive nature of cultural heritage, historic remnants, handicrafts, artistic and architectural styles, climatic and ethnic variety, and historic and religious rituals. Have the potential to turn Iran into an important tourism hub in the world and the region. Some of the tourism rules and Iran's outlook towards the west also need to change. Just as when Iran was a transit

between Chinese tourists going to Europe, with the help of Spain as a transit country which is a tourism hub, with culture, ancient history, and original art, we can bring tourists coming from all over the world to Spain to Iran and bring financial benefits to both countries.

- As stated before Iran has many institutes, organizations, and a few ministries that directly and indirectly participate in cultural affairs and cultural heritage. Each one receives a separate budget from the government and all except a few do the same job. Therefore, these institutions do parallel work and also rework. This causes the cultural heritage budget to be wasted. We should remember that the cultural budget in Iran is a small part of the whole budget. This small portion also breaks down further and very little amounts reach the ancient history protection sectors. Therefore, in the lacking of international connection and cooperation of international organizations for cultural heritage, especially the ancient history sectors, we cannot have a good prospect. It is also best to divide responsibilities of cultural affairs into three ministries of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism; Ministry of education; and Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization to prevent parallel work and rework. Additionally, there is a shortage of skilled human resources in this sector and we need to use the human resources we have on purpose. If an organization has insight into cultural affairs, it should allocate its cultural expenses to the mentioned four organizations and collaborate with them to produce cultural and artistic products and host conferences, and work to advertise and maintain cultural heritage.
- Another issue is the outlook of some high-ranking IRI officials to ancient Iran especially the Achaemenid era and the fact that they were highly expressed by the Pahlavi dynasty. At the beginning of the revolution, there was a lot of

disagreement about the symbols of the Pahlavi dynasty which is the nature of any revolution. This caused some of the officials of the time that did not know about ancient Iran to have any distinguishment between the transferable and non-transferable remnants and symbols of the ancient era and the Pahlavi dynasty. This matter has caused damage from different fronts to the ancient era. This issue has slowly been resolved and must be solved completely. In the present day, after the Islamic revolution, we must look at the Pahlavi era as part of our history and protect its historic remnants.

- Privatization as was introduced in 1978 is a holistic problem within the economic system of IRI. The government took over all private organizations and the constitution states that these organizations must be correctly returned to the private sector. Sadly, this did not occur and privatization turned to economic rent. Privatization with the specific name of privic (private + public) means the government, government-dependent organizations, or governmental organizations possess companies, factories, and huge economic corporations. This has become widespread in Iran and needs revision. Clause 72 affirms the importance of repair, maintenance, and protection of historic remnants and states this responsibility can be given to the private sector legally. This is while the allocation of this vital responsibility to the private sector has issues and can be challenging because the infrastructure of privatization in our country is troublesome and the few companies and specialized holding companies in specific fields within the private sector have not been capable in general. In these circumstances, the responsibility assignment of repair, maintenance, and protection of cultural heritage responsibilities to the weak private sector that aims at maximizing its profits is not reasonable. Since these heritages are nationally valuable and do not

belong only to a group or person, it is best to have national and global oversight on their protection and maintenance.

In Iran, private companies use advanced technologies which help in the repair, protection, and advertisement of heritages in the tourism industry. Some of these technologies have been used by the government in the Pasargadae research foundation, such as virtual reality glasses (VR technology).

- It is best to choose Iran's cultural advisors working in embassies through the cultural heritage tourism, and handicraft ministry rather than the Islamic Development Organization. It is best to choose one expert in both fields of Islamic and ancient Iran or to choose two experts for each field. This causes IRI to take an active role in conferences, exhibits, and turn Iranian conferences on history into an active one. It is best to provide the infrastructure for tourists to witness our ancient cultural heritages in our museums rather than sending our heritages abroad from the National Museum of Iran to be showcased in museums. This is a common practice but it is best to attract tourists.

# **appendix: The Achaemenid History And Art**

## **1. Introduction**

The Achaemenids, as a great global empire, played a major role in transforming the political conditions inside and outside its rule along with the social, economic, and cultural conditions of its time and even future historical periods. This effect is so important that after many centuries, the national identity of Iranians is still interwoven into this dynasty and their cultural, artistic, historical, political, and governmental achievements. With a realm extending from the Indus Valley to southeastern Europe and from the western edges of the Himalayas to northeastern Africa, the Achaemenid Empire was the first and greatest Persian empire reigning over these lands for more than two centuries. However, after many centuries it is a question that what effects what was left behind after the complete dominance of this dynasty and civilization on this region have had on the position, history, identity, and our modern understanding, and what role contemporary governments and regimes have played in identifying, evaluating, and introducing them?

Anyways, before dealing with such issues to find potential answers, solutions, and conclusions, it is necessary to discuss the Achaemenids and the civilizations of ancient Iran. This chapter includes three separate yet related sections covering topics, such as the history, the signs and symbols, and the art of the Achaemenids. In each of these sections, based on the intended content and goals, a general overview of the identity, background, genealogy, activities, achievements, and overall mannerisms and worldview of the Achaemenids along with their resulting culture and arts will be discussed.

## **2. The Achaemenid History**

### **2.1. The Medes and the Persians**



While the pre-history Iran was the cradle for the emergence and development of advanced civilizations, including Marlik<sup>50</sup>, Sialk<sup>51</sup>, Jiroft<sup>52</sup>, Shahr-e Sukhteh<sup>53</sup>, and

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<sup>50</sup> An ancient civilization that goes back to at least 5,000 BC. Marlik is made of two words “Mard” (referring to Amards) and “Lik” (ethnicity). Scholars assume the Marlik Hill in Gohar Roud Valley in today’s Gilan Province of Iran was the private burial place for rulers, princes, and people of Amard. Very ancient, valuable, and unprecedented objects were discovered in this location in 1961 by an Iranian archeological team under the supervision of Dr. Ezatollah Negahban. Moreover, the Golden Cup of Marlik (Fig A) discovered in this region is considered as the symbol of the Amard people.



Fig A: Golden Marlik Cup as the Symbol of Amardian People on the Right; Golden Marlik Cup with Embossed Deer on the Left

<sup>51</sup> The ancient Sialk plaza is located in Fin, Kashan, and it goes back at least 7,000 years. The archeological site of “Sialk Hill” was the first urban civilization in the central region of Iran, hosting valuable historical artifacts such as the oldest man-made adobe of the world, the Sialk Ziggurat, and painted pottery (Fig B).



Figure B: Painted Pottery of Sialk

<sup>52</sup> The Jiroft civilization refers to a set of ancient sites and archeological finds discovered in Kerman Province, near Jiroft City and Halil Roud River. The discovery of such a civilization opened up new horizons for the findings and notions of archeologists about the civilizations of the Middle East. The decorative objects and utensils with remarkable and innovative embossed images (Fig C) belonging to the third millennium BC related to the Jiroft Civilization have been discovered so far. The historical artifacts discovered in Shahr-e Sukhteh indicate the presence of commercial relations between the ancient Jiroft City and Shahr-e Sukhteh.



Fig C: Stone Artifacts from Jiroft Civilization (majority of them are built from black rock)

Elam<sup>54</sup>, it was the Medes who established the first large government in this region. Reviewing historical texts indicates that the Medes were scattered from the north to the northern areas of Zagros Mountains (Azerbaijan region), from the west of the Qazvin-Tehran region to Damavand, from the east to Dasht-e Kavir Desert, and from the south to Isfahan and Sefid-Rud River valley (Imaapour, 2002, 2003, p 62).

According to Assyrian inscriptions<sup>55</sup>, during several generations, the Persians gradually moved from an area in the eastern region of Lake Urmia called “Parsua” towards the south of the plateau and stopped around Shooshtar and Masjed

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<sup>53</sup> Shahr-e Sukhteh is one of the ancient historical sites in Sistan and Baluchestan Province of Iran, built during the Bronze Age and the Jiroft Civilization. The city was built on the banks of Hirmand River and Hamoun Lake, which is located besides the current Zabol road (Fig D).



Fig D: Shahr-e Sukhteh and Some Artifacts Discovered in Shahr-e Sukhteh

<sup>54</sup> Since the beginning of the Proto-Elamite period until the end of the Neo-Elamite period, Elamites lived and reigned over southwestern Iran for about 2,661 years. Around 2700 BC, the Elamite Empire was established with its capital at Susa. In 639 BC, Ashurbanipal, the king of the Neo-Assyrian Empire defeated Elam and sacked Susa. After this war, Elam never managed to emerge as an independent power again.

<sup>55</sup> The Assyrian government was an important government which formed in ancient Middle East and at first it was subject to Babylonia. In 1800 BC, the early Assyrian rulers integrated the cities of Ashur, Nineveh, and Erbil, and the Assyrian dynasties formed after 1420 BC. Ashur stood for about a thousand years. Based on the climatic conditions of their realm, Assyrians were less engaged in agriculture, and they were more of a warrior people invading their neighbors to make their livelihood.

Soleyman (Fig 14) which is a place called Pars where Cyrus<sup>56</sup> the Great started his war against Astyages<sup>57</sup> at the time (Westhoefer, 2009, p 20). The background and history of the Medes and Persians go back to people who are nowadays called Proto Indo-European. They first emerged in Anatolia (Asia Minor) and/or a region on the border between the south of Ukraine and Russia. By the presence of these Indo-Europeans, some languages like Persian, English, and many other European languages emerged (Burgan, 2010, p 20).



Figure 14: Medes and Persians map Illustration by Sayed Mohammad Tabasi (Researcher), Published on August 15, 2020

Based on the reports of Herodotus, we see an authoritative and integrated Medes empire that succeeds in overcoming Persians and taxing them at the time of Phraortes. However, the information provided by other historical evidence indicates the peaceful coexistence of these two ethnic groups. Considering the political and

<sup>56</sup> Cyrus II (Cyrus the Great), Latinized as Cyrus, is written as ‘Koresh’ in Hebrew

<sup>57</sup> Ruler of Medes and the grandfather of Cyrus the Great

military conditions of that time in the region where Assyrians were always invading Medes and Persian peoples, it seems farfetched that the Median Phraortes would think about dominating the Persians who were closer than any other ethnic group to the Medes instead of fighting their common enemy, i.e., the Assyrians. On the other hand, Assyrian and Babylonian<sup>58</sup> sources indicate the independence and military might of the Persians in the region and their signing of military covenants against Assyrians, ultimately dominating them (Thomas, 1958, p 90).

Another piece of evidence is the marriage between the daughter of Astyages and Cambyses<sup>59</sup>, the Persian King as a political marriage for the political union of these two regional powers. Probably, these two were considered equal powers in the region (Imaapour, 2002, p 62). It should be noted that Cyrus the Great claims in his famous Cyrus Cylinder <sup>60</sup>that four generations of his ancestors to Tiespes<sup>61</sup> ruled Anshan<sup>62</sup> (Brosius, 2009, p 64). Moreover, Darius the Great also talks about the reign of his ancestors over Persia until the time of the Achaemenid. It is also worth mentioning that some historians do not consider Medes as an empire. Sancisi-Weerdenburg says that despite the common belief, the Medes did not establish an empire, and they didn't even manage to create a permanent government. Only in critical situations, they would create an association with a tribal structure (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 2009, 301).

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<sup>58</sup> The Babylonian civilization was located in Mesopotamia in the catchment area of Euphrates River. The capital of this ancient civilization was the City of Babylonia. Nowadays, the ruins of this ancient city can be found about 88 KM to the south of Baghdad in modern Iraq

<sup>59</sup> Cambyses I (Anshan Empire), son of Cyrus I (Anshan Empire)

<sup>60</sup> The Cyrus Cylinder or the Cyrus Charter is a cylinder of baked clay which was written in 538 BC by the order of Cyrus the Great. This cylinder was found in 1879 in the temple of Ésaġila dedicated to Marduk, the great god of Babylonia in the ancient city of Babylonia. It is currently kept at British Museum of London.

<sup>61</sup> Tiespes (650 BC- 620 BC) was the son and successor of Achaemenid, the king of the Persian region.

<sup>62</sup> Anshan, which is located in the western corner of Marvdasht City in the northern part of modern-day Shiraz in Fars Province, was one of the important provinces of Elam.

Although the above-mentioned considerations do not indicate the superiority of Medes over Persians, there are other reasons making historians believe that the Medes also had an independent empire. One of these reasons is a common belief that only the Assyrians would be able to destroy the Assyrian Empire so the Medes had to have their empire. The second reason is the close relationship between the Medes and the Persians, and the name of the Medes that has often accompanied the Persian Empire has resulted in the belief that the Medes must have had an empire before their decline. Finally, the third reason is the report of Herodotus which revokes the idea of a Median Empire. Therefore, based on historical evidence and aside from the one-sided view of Herodotus, the Medes can be considered as a strong and stable political organization living peacefully alongside the Persians until the famous Battle of Pasargadae<sup>63</sup> when Cyrus started his war with the Medes resulting in the collapse of the Medes Empire.

## **2.2. The Achaemenids**

The Persians who were a group of Aryans erected the pillars of their empire circa 700-675 BC under the command of Achaemenid<sup>64</sup> (Bayani, 2006, p 18). The Persians took advantage of the conflicts between the Assyrians and the Medes and conquered Anshan. This historical event happened at the time of Teispes (Shahijani, 2010, p 18). Teispes took the reins of power in 675-640 BC expanded his realm and then divided it between his sons, Cyrus I (the King of Anshan) and Ariaramnes (King of Persia). After these two, Arsames (Persian Empire) and Cambyses I (Anshan Empire) became kings.

As noted earlier, Cambyses I married the daughter of Astyages, the last king of the Median Empire, and this marriage resulted in the birth of Cyrus the Great. As Cyrus

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<sup>63</sup> The victory of Cyrus the Great in the Battle of Pasargadae and the fall of the Medes.

<sup>64</sup> The great ancestor of the Achaemenids; “Achae” means “friend” and “Menid” means “thought and wisdom”.



had been raised in the court of Astyages, he was appointed the king of Persia. However, he rebelled, and in 550 BC, after overcoming the Medes, he established the Persian Empire (the Achaemenid Empire). After a while, Arsames gave his throne to Cyrus. The Achaemenids have always claimed the real founder of their dynasty to be Teispes (Fig 15). In some of the tablets from Persepolis, there is the trace of a cylindrical seal with Elamite inscriptions, and it is translated as Cyrus from Anshan, the son of Teispes. In addition, Darius the Great would use any opportunity he had to picture Cyrus the Great as one of the prominent ancestors and one of the great Achaemenid kings.

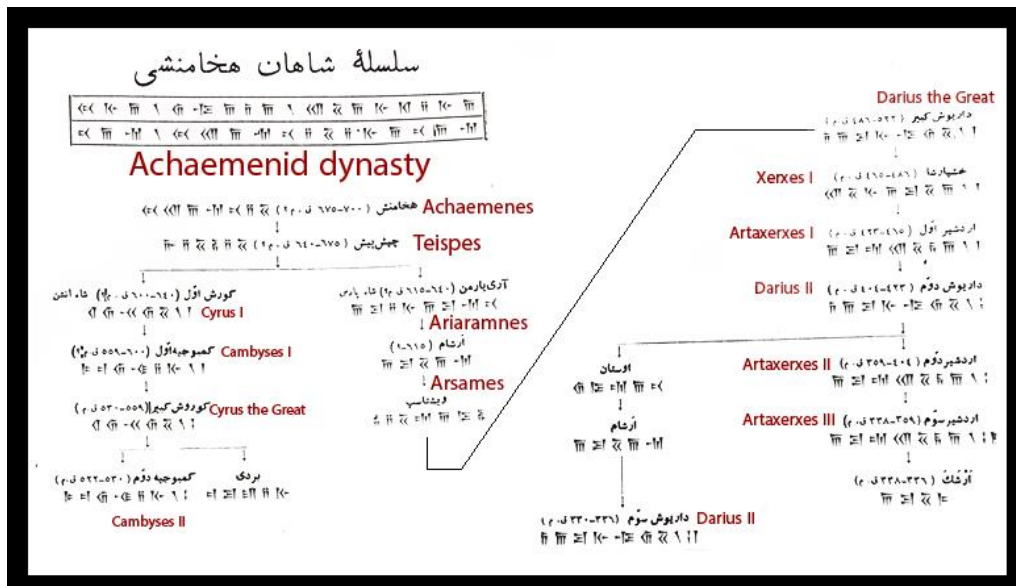


Figure 15: The Genealogy of Achaemenid Kings from the Book “The Commands of Achaemenid Kings” Written in Ancient Persian (Aryan) Language. The Names Were translated by Tabasi (Researcher).

Therefore, based on available documents, the Achaemenid empire started from the reign of Cyrus II which coincides with the overthrow of the Medes (550 BC) and then the conquest of Babylonia (539 BC) (Brosius, 2010, p 54). This empire lasted for 220 years. After the Medes, the Achaemenids were the first historical kingdom

after the mythological kingdom of Keyumars<sup>65</sup>. They reigned over a large portion of the known world at the time from Indus to the Danube in Europe and from Central Asia to Northeast Africa. The names of these regions are described in detail in the tomb of Darius located in Naqsh-e Rostam. This dynasty reigned over an area of two million square miles (more than five million square kilometers), but its main core was southeastern Iran. This geographical region was the ancient Pārsa (Greek: Persepolis) which is synonymous with Persian (Iran), later generalized to the whole country. Specifically, Pārsa was equivalent to modern Fars extending from the south of Zagros Mountain Range to the coast of the Persian Gulf and the plains of Khuzestan (ancient Susa) (Waters, 2014, p 9-10). Currently, UNESCO has the Achaemenids Empire registered as the first and largest ancient kingdom based on available documents (Fig 16)

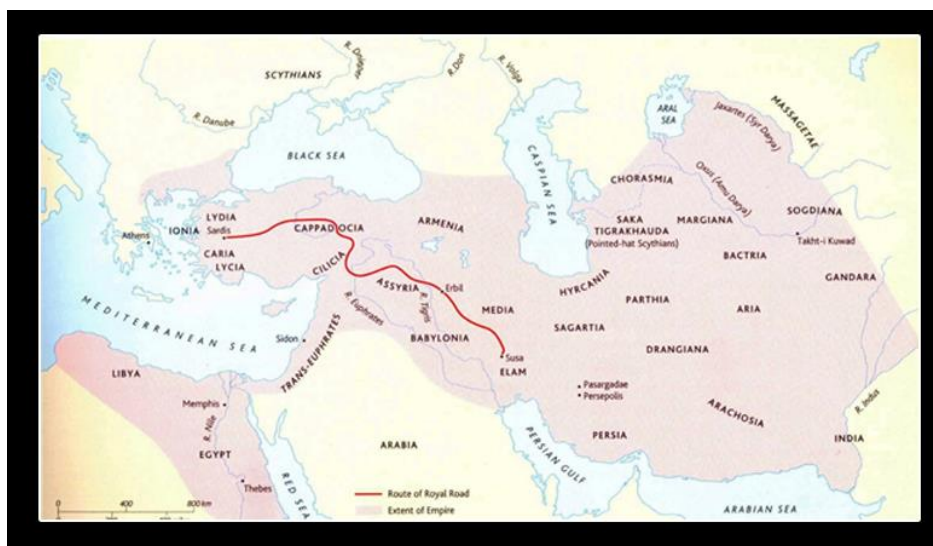


Figure 16: The Territory of the Achaemenid Empire in Its Largest Form with Main Regions and Roads from Susa to Sardinia (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 11)

<sup>65</sup> Keyumars, Gayōmard in Pahlavi, and Gaiio Mōrētan in Avestan is the name of the mythological first human in the worldview of Mazdayasna, and he is the first king Shahnameh. He is the first human created by Ahura Mazda. Keyumars lived alone in the mountains for 30 years. When he was dying, a sperm came out of him, which was purified by the sunlight and kept under the soil. After forty years, that sperm grew up in the form of a plant shaped like two rhubarb stems in the month of Mehr at the day of Mehr (Mehregan Festival). Afterward, that plant form transformed into two humans who were similar in appearance and figure. One was a male named Mashya and the other a female named Mashyana, who married each other after fifty years.

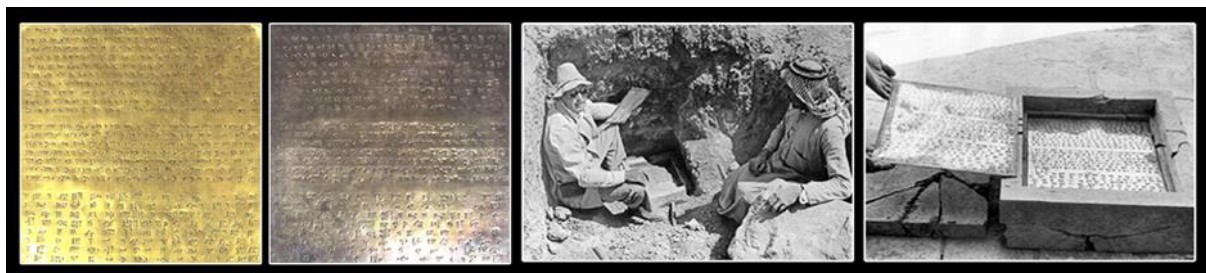


The Achaemenid kings led to the expansion of agriculture, commerce, and the rule of law in their realm. In this royal system, the king and the royal institution were considered important pillars of the government and the political culture. The Achaemenid king valued two main things: the war force and the prosperity of the land. The king would reward those governors who build up arid lands and would add to the size of their realms. At that time, theoretically, the king was considered the owner of all Persian lands and regions. Darius and his successors were constantly rewarding individuals who were serving them as officers or the cavalry in the military with land and real estate (Nardo, 2009, p 67).

The ethical pillars of the Achaemenid Empire, especially at the time of kings, such as Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great guaranteed respect for the beliefs of people and supported the powerless against the powerful. They were trying to combine and integrate races and cultures. On the other hand, they respected the beliefs of subordinate ethnic groups. Scholars consider the proclamation of Cyrus the Great when conquering Babylonia as an example of the pillars of human rights in ancient times.

### **2.3. Language in the Achaemenid Period**

The three common languages in the Achaemenid period included Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite (Fig 17).



*Figure 17: Silver and Gold Tablets Written in Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian Languages Discovered from Apadana Hall (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, 57)-The composition of the images and using the relevant pictures by the author.*

- Persian: This language was the language of the Persian kings and the citizens of their birthplace, i.e., people in the southwestern region of modern Iran. Some traces survived of the ancient Persian language in modern Persian. Therefore, understanding ancient Persian words is easier using old Sanskrit since it is close to Persian.
- Babylonian: This language and writing system was obtained from the dominated people of Babylonia after it was conquered by the Achaemenids. This writing system is based on cuneiform and the language is among the Semitic languages.
- Elamite: The language spoken by the Elamite people in the capital city of Susa. The early Achaemenids were living in this region before the reign of Cyrus.

#### **2.4. Writing System in the Achaemenid Period**

For human beings to express their meanings more easily at any historical period, they tried to invent a writing system with a simple structure, that allows the expression of one's intent. The cuneiform is the first writing system of Mesopotamia, and it is a writing system based on symbols that look like wedges. Scholars believe that this writing system was developed by the Sumerians, and later on, when Assyrians, Babylonians, and Elamite people came to this region, they learned it from the Sumerians. The Medes and the Persians acquired this writing system from Assyrians and Elamites, and they transformed it from the graphic and melodic form into the alphabetic type. One of the writing systems commonly used during the Achaemenid period was the cuneiform employed for writing the ancient Persian language. The reason the cuneiform has only been used in Iran in elegant epigraphs and not anywhere else is that the Achaemenid cuneiform writing would be inscribed

on important commercial roads, the tombs of the kings, on the walls and pillars of the palaces, and stone vases and seals (Fig 18-19).

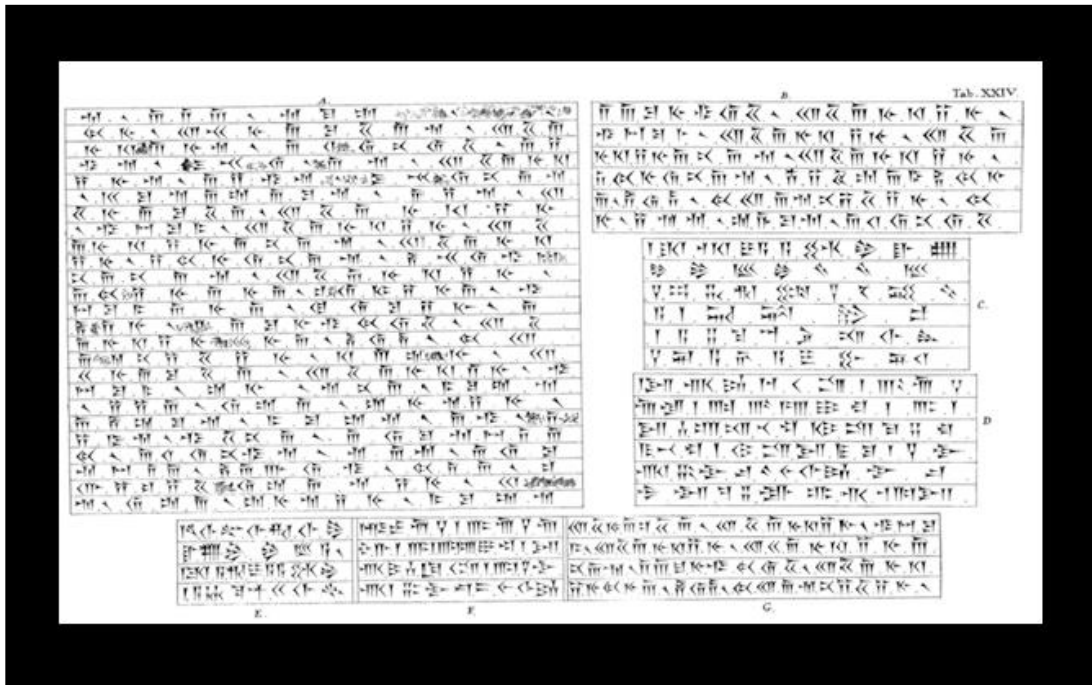


Figure 18: A Copy of Cuneiform Inscriptions in Persepolis (Persepolis, Mousavi, 2012, p 118)

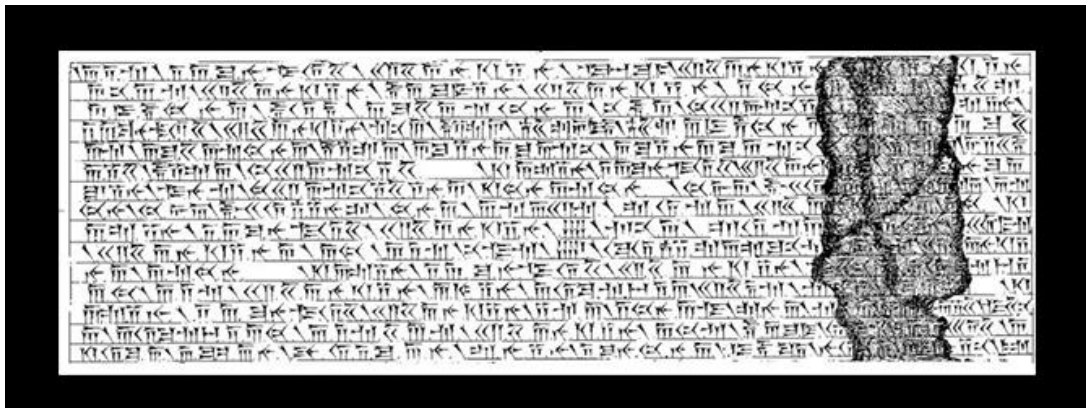


Figure 19: Part of the Behistun Inscription in Achaemenid Cuneiform

Ghirshman states that among thousands of tablets discovered in the treasury of the royal documents in Persepolis, the majority are written in Elamite writing which is another evidence that they used the Aramaic alphabet for writing ancient Persian,

and gradually the Aramaic writing system replaced the cuneiform. The Pahlavi writing <sup>66</sup>system started at this juncture as well (Ghirshman, 1993, p 182).

## **2.5. The Religion of the Achaemenids**

The information available about the beliefs and religious rituals of the Persians during the Achaemenid period is very scarce and diverse. Some scholars believe in this traditional view that the life of Zoroaster coincided with the late Medes Empire and early Achaemenid Empire, while some others believe that the Achaemenid kings were the followers of old Aryan religion and polytheistic religions (believing in multiple gods and the complete superiority of one god over the others), while it is possible that the people under their rule gradually accepted Zoroastrianism. Some archaeologists do not consider the kings of the first half of the Achaemenid period, especially Cyrus and Darius the Great, the followers of Zoroaster believe the later kings were believers in the teachings of Zoroaster.

Researchers, scholars, and archaeologists use the materials available in tablets and epigraphs of Achaemenid kings and the non-Persians of the ancient period along with the host of ambiguous and conflicting information from classic Greek historians, and the information in the Avesta to provide some documents for understanding the beliefs of the Achaemenids. However, the Iranian researcher, Yahya Zoka, provides some insights based on the above-mentioned sources which are worth contemplating. He offers a lot of information based on a unique analytical approach to prove that the Achaemenids were not Zoroastrian:

- In the writings survived by the Achaemenids, there is no mention of Zoroaster at all, and it is highly unreasonable and somewhat impossible

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<sup>66</sup> This script is among the ones used for writing Middle Persian and Arsacid Pahlavi (Parthian language). This script is rooted in Aramaic writing system and it is written from right to left similar to Aramaic.

that an ethnic group fails to mention the name of the founder of their religion.

- In the epigraphs and tablets as well as the writings of ancient historians, the Avesta is not mentioned as the heavenly and religious book of the Achaemenids.
- Based on the materials in Gathas, which is the main book of Zoroastrianism, Zoroaster was teaching monotheism, while the Achaemenid tablets and materials show that the Achaemenids believed in multiple gods<sup>67</sup>. For instance, there are writings where the Ahura Mazda is mentioned as the greatest god and other gods are mentioned as well, and writings where in addition to the names of Ahura Mazda, Mithra and Anahita are also mentioned with or separate from Ahura Mazda (the most important epigraphs where we find the name of Ahura Mazda are the metal tablets of Ariaramnes and Arsames).
- In their religious rituals and celebrations, Zoroastrians explicitly forbid the sacrifice of animals, while the Achaemenids sacrifices cows, camels, and sheep to satisfy their gods in their religious rituals<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> In the epigraphs from the late Achaemenid kings, i.e., Artaxerxes II of Persia (404-395 BC) and Artaxerxes III of Persia (359-338 BC), along with the name of 'Ahura Mazda', we see the name of 'Mithra' or 'Mihr' talked about as well. In the epigraph of Artaxerxes II of Persia in Ecbatana (Hamedan), Mithra is mentioned along with Ahura Mazda and Anahita: "Do not destroy or harm this palace which I built based on the will of Ahura Mazda, Anahita, and Mithra". Moreover, in the epigraph of Artaxerxes III of Persia in Persepolis, carved in the northern wall of the porch in the palace of Artaxerxes and along the western stairs of the palace of Darius, Mithra is mentioned: "Ahura Mazda and Mithra bless this land and what I did in it". In the Elamite epigraphs of Persepolis, we see the name of Mithra mentioned along with Iranian and non-Iranian gods.

<sup>68</sup> Ghirshman says that the Persians prayed to their gods by blood sacrifices and all the sacrifices had to be done in the presence of the Magi (Ghirshman, 2007, p 173). In the myth of Mithra, there is this belief that upon the command of the gods, Mithra attacks the First Cow and after a heated struggle, he gets up on the back of the cow and rides it into a cave. When the cow finds the opportunity, she escapes Mithra and goes to a meadow. However, the sun sends its messenger, which is a crow or a falcon, to inform Mithra of where the cow is hiding. There is another battle between the First Cow and Mithra, and Mithra is forced to kill the cow. After the killing, the spilled blood of the cow on wheat farms, empowers the wheat to grow. This story in the Mithra thought led to the sacrifice of the Holy Cow for the continuation of the life of nature every year by the followers of Mithra.

- The teachings of Zoroaster forbid the drinking of alcoholic beverages in religious rituals, while in the religious rituals of the Achaemenids, drinking and giving out alcohol was common (Zoka, 1998, p 26-27).

The argument offered by this Iranian researcher is that one of the main pillars of Zoroastrianism is to refrain from burying the dead in the land to prevent the pollution of the land during the entire history of this religion, while the Achaemenid kings and people of Iran at the time buried their dead in personal or family graves<sup>69</sup>, and it can be concluded that there were major differences between the religious beliefs of the Achaemenids and the pillars and basics of Zoroastrianism.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the common beliefs between Achaemenids and Zoroastrians can be the reason why some scholars believed Achaemenids to be Zoroastrian. They are such as the following:

- The common use of the name of Ahura Mazda which is the great god of both of these ethnic groups, along with the common use of the name of Mihr and Nahid which are considered gods by the Achaemenids, and angels by the Zoroastrians.
- Worship and prayer in front of the fire and building fire temples (Fig 20).

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<sup>69</sup> The Achaemenids would bury their kings in graves carved in the rocks of Naqsh-e Rostam in Persepolis, while they would bury prominent figures and famous individuals in rock and soil graves .



*Figure 20: Mehrbin Fire Temple which is also known by the locals as Marbin Fire Temple or Castle. It is located in the western parts of Isfahan City, 8 km from the city center on Atashgah Street- Design by the Author*

However, through close evaluation and investigation of all the above-mentioned documents, the only certain conclusion about the religion of the Achaemenid kings is that they were not Zoroastrian.

On the other hand, the figure of the falcon<sup>70</sup> which is the symbol of the Achaemenid Empire along with other symbols of Mithraism in the Achaemenid art and culture, as well as the use of God of Mihr in the Achaemenid court can be interpreted as a

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<sup>70</sup> The vexilloid of the Achaemenid Empire is an image of a falcon. The falcon was a symbol for sun, and the sun itself is a symbol of Mihr (Mithra) (Zare, 2008) (Fig E).



Figure E: Standard of Cyrus the Great ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid\\_Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire))

symbol of Mihr. The Mihr symbol can be considered as a unifying factor for creating a shared sense for the continuation of many affairs. According to the reports by Xenophon and Plutarch, in the oath ceremonies held at the beginning of the battles and when moving toward the battlefield, they prayed to Mihr (Mithra) (Benveniste, 1998, p34).

These documents and previous arguments show that the Achaemenids were not Zoroastrian; rather, they were Mithraists and believed in a trinity of gods with Ahura Mazda on the top and Anahita and Nahid positioned below him.

## **2.6. The Achaemenid Kings**

### **2.6.1. Cyrus the Great (558-530 BC)**

Iranians would call Cyrus “the Father”, and the Greeks whose lands were conquered by Cyrus the Great would call him “master” and “legislator”. The Jewish people considered this king as their Messiah, and the Babylonians thought that Marduk had blessed Cyrus the Great. Some of the contemporary Shiite clergies consider Cyrus the Great to be Dhu al-Qarnayn<sup>71</sup>, the divine prophet. Cyrus the Great selected a wife named Cassandane from the Achaemenid clan, and they had five children, two sons, and three daughters. The sons of Cyrus the Great were Cambyses II and Bardiya, and his daughters were Atossa, Roxane, and Artystone. As mentioned earlier, the kings of the first half of the Achaemenid period believed in polytheism. However, the available information about the religious beliefs of Cyrus the Great is limited to the letter by Xenophon and Babylonian epigraphs. According to Xenophon, Cyrus worshiped other gods or all the gods. The gods respected by Cyrus

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<sup>71</sup> It is probable that Cyrus the Great is the very person referred to as Dhu al-Qarnayn in Holy Quran, and in Chapter 18 verses 83 onwards, we read: [“And they ask you about Dhu al-Qarnayn. Say, “I will tell you something about him.” We established him on earth, and gave him all kinds of means. He pursued a certain course. Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a murky spring, and found a people in its vicinity. We said, “O Dhu al-Qarnayn, you may either inflict a penalty, or else treat them kindly.”] (Shahijani, 2010, p 20).



the Great were Ahura Mazda, Mithra<sup>72</sup>, Azar<sup>73</sup>, and Anahita<sup>74</sup>, and he would dedicate sacrifices to them.

To start his reign, Cyrus the Great fought the Medes and conquered them. After conquering the Medes, he seized the City of Babylon which was located near the Zagros Mountain Range. He allowed the displaced Jews to go back to Jerusalem and freely build synagogues there. After conquering Babylonia, Cyrus attacked Croesus, the Lydian king, who had recently occupied Cappadocia, and defeated him in 546

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<sup>72</sup> Mithra or Mihra is the ancient Aryan or Indo-Iranian god, which is one of the oldest myths of humanity and the gods of ancient Iran before the emergence of Zoroaster. The name also means covenant, love, and the sun. according to the ancient Iranian myths, at the end of Shab-e Yalda (the night of the Northern Hemisphere's winter solstice), Mihr was riding a chariot with four horses, which represent the four main elements, and he rises to the skies and becomes one with the sun. The sun gets warm and light from Mihr, and at the dawn after the longest night of the earth, he rises in the sky, and from then on, the sun lights and warms the earth with the help of the moon. This is why Mithraists pray to the sun when worshiping Mihr, and they consider the sun to be the symbol of Mihr.

<sup>73</sup> Azar or Atar is the god of fire, and it is another god from ancient Iran who was respected by the Iranians. The Iranians valued and respected the four elements of water, wind, earth, and fire very much. Among these elements, fire was more important for the Iranians. Herodotus writes: "Iranians look at fire as a god and never pollute it". The presence of a firebox in the epigraphs of the tomb of Darius, in the illustrations in Persepolis, and on coins indicates the importance of this element in ancient Iran.

<sup>74</sup> Anahita or Aredvi Sura Anahita in Avestan is the name of one of the ancient Iranian goddesses. Anahita has a cosmological Indo-Iranian figure and he is considered and venerated as the goddess of waters. According to the beliefs of ancient Iranians, she was the guarding angel of springs and rainfall, and she was the symbol for fertility, love, friendship, healing, and wisdom. When Anahita commands, the rain falls, rivers flow, plants grow, and animals and humans procreate, and the blessing of Anahita covers all living creatures (Fig F).

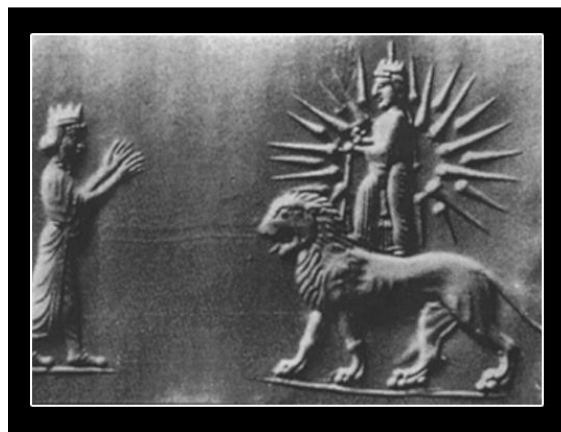


Fig F: The King Riding a Lion Approaching Anahita from a Cylinder Seal (Waters, 2014, p 192)

BC in Sardis<sup>75</sup>. Cyrus the Great brought the entire Asia Minor region and the cities of Anatolia under his own rule.

From the very beginning, the main goal of Cyrus the Great was to integrate and unify, and to create a central government. He wanted to create a unified nation out of the Aryan race and its various clans who were scattered in the Iranian Plateau (Bakhtortash, 1971, p 5). There is no doubt that Cyrus had prepared the necessary preliminaries for conquering Egypt; however, he first decided to save the northeastern borders of the Achaemenid Empire from the invasions of nomadic Massagetai people. These invasions caused a lot of losses and harm for the city-dwelling Iranians who were interwoven into the Achaemenid Empire (Dandamayev, 1964, p 128).

In 539 BC, Cyrus the Great started his war against Massagetai. According to Piankov, this war was against the nomadic people living in a plain in northern Hyrcania and on the eastern parts of the Hyrcanian Sea (Piankov, 1964, p 128). Through some tricks, Cyrus attacked one of their camps and killed all the residents. However, after this event, the major part of the Massagetai forces, under the command of Tomyris the Queen, defeated Iranians heavily, ultimately killing Cyrus the Great<sup>76</sup>(Dandamayev, 2010, p 90).

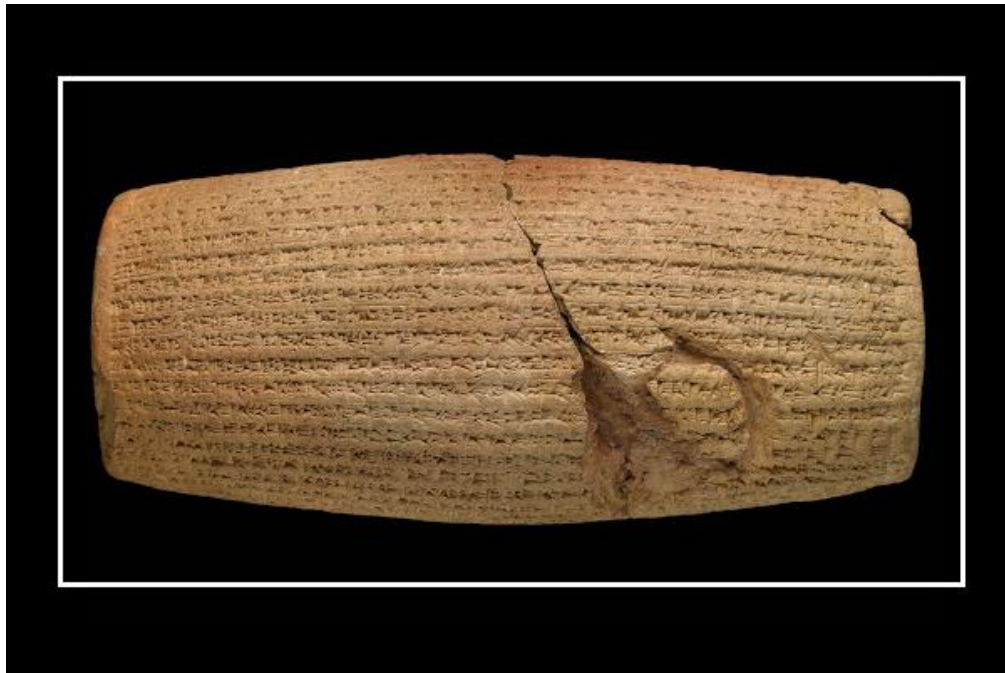
While the governance, military attacks, activities, and the life and politics of Cyrus the Great in general can be seen as part of the historical events of the time, they also provide great insights recorded in history. Nowadays, the command of Cyrus the

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<sup>75</sup> A region located in Anatolia

<sup>76</sup> According to another narrative from Xenophon in *Cyropaedia*, Cyrus died naturally in Pars. He says that Cyrus was informed of his death in his dreams, so after praying, he offered some advice to his loved ones, his friends, and the prominent figures of the country, and then he passed away.

Great is considered the first proclamation of human rights, and it is a manifestation of values, altruism, and humanism (Fig 21).



*Figure 21: The Cyrus Charter (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 59)*

### **2.6.2. Cambyses II (530-522 BC)**

Before becoming the king and at the time of the reign of his father, Cyrus the Great, Cambyses II had the title of the King of Babylonia and he was King Regent, succeeding his father after his death. However, at the time of the Achaemenids, the oldest son was not the natural successor, and this procedure depended on the will of the ruler who would select one of his sons as a successor. While appointing the first son was common, it was not a binding rule.

After ascending to the throne, Cambyses II spent most of his time preparing an attack against Egypt. In May of 525 BC, his army reached Pelusium and fought the Egyptian army, ultimately defeating the army of Psamtik III. In June of 525 BC, the army of Cambyses II traversed the Nile Valley from the north to the south, conquering entire Egypt. After conquering Egypt, Cambyses II established order and

security and followed the same policy of religious tolerance as his father. As reported in some contemporary western sources, Cambyses II had the same behavior in Egypt that his father previously had in Babylonia. He respected the gods of Egypt and strived for the interests of the Egyptian nation (Ghirshman, 2007, p 179). According to the traditional Egyptian rules, he officially became the Pharaoh of Egypt and called himself the King of Upper and Lower Egypt.

However, some historians cite the dissatisfaction of Egyptian and Iranian peoples with Cambyses II. Herodotus says that Iranians called Cambyses II an oppressor since he was semi-crazy, authoritative, and insolent<sup>77</sup>. However, this seems to be rooted in the negative propaganda by Iranians and Egyptians after Cambyses II.

Continuing with his seizing, Cambyses II was ready to attack Nubia when the news came from Persia that Bardiya<sup>78</sup> was alive and had started a rebellion against Cambyses II. Therefore, Cambyses II stopped his campaigns in Egypt and ran to the south of Iran. However, on the path to Syria, he was mysteriously killed (Shahijani, 2010, p 29).

### **2.6.3. Darius the Great (522-486 BC)**

The governing style of Cambyses II, and after a king like Cyrus the Great at that, had ruined the backbone of the Iranian government, until after the death of Cambyses II, Darius became the commander of a small group whose goal was to save the heritage of Cyrus the Great from the magi usurpers<sup>79</sup>. Darius saw himself as a member of the Achaemenid clan<sup>80</sup> and saw Bardya as the usurper of the throne of

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<sup>77</sup> Some other Greek historians report that Cambyses II injured Apis, the Sacred Bull, with a dagger, and this bull later died because of the injuries. This caused the dissatisfaction of Egyptians; however, archeologists have proved this to be wrong.

<sup>78</sup> Bardya was the brother of Cambyses II and the other son of Cyrus the Great. However, some reports say Cambyses II killed Bardya because he feared he might rebel against him. However, the text here refers to Gaumata, the Magus, who was known as the False Bardya (Dandamayev, 1973, p 320).

<sup>79</sup> Referring to the False Bardya

<sup>80</sup> Darius was related to one of the secondary families of the Achaemenid dynasty. Arsames was the grandfather of Darius the Great, and he was a king when he was alive (Shahijani, 2010, p 30).

the Achaemenid Empire. At this time, the 28-year-old Darius was a perfect example and representative of the Iranian cavalry riders in terms of physical and mental structure (Shahbazi, 1977, p 20).

In Behistun Inscription says that Darius the King said, “my father was Hystaspes, his father was Arsames, his father was Ariaramnes, his father was Teispes, and his father was Achaemenes; that is why we are called Achaemenids”.

Based on new findings, by mentioning the name of Achaemenes in this text, Darius was trying to get the approval of his people. In addition to this result, using the name of Achaemenes led to this that any member of the descendants of Cyrus the Great would be considered a member of the Achaemenid family, and a continuous Iranian-Achaemenid past was formed.

After overthrowing Bardya, and at beginning of his reign, Darius extinguished the many rebellions which had been developed in the country<sup>81</sup>. Circa 517 BC, he went to Egypt to extinguish the rebellion of Aryandes, the governor of Egypt. In addition to conquering Egypt again, upon the request of a regional ruler in northern Libya, some units of the Iranian army entered the Sahara in Africa and advanced to Euesperides (modern-day Benghazi<sup>82</sup>). Within seven years, Darius covered the length and width of the large Iranian land extended from the east to the borders of China and India and from the west to Egypt and Greece, and the vast territory

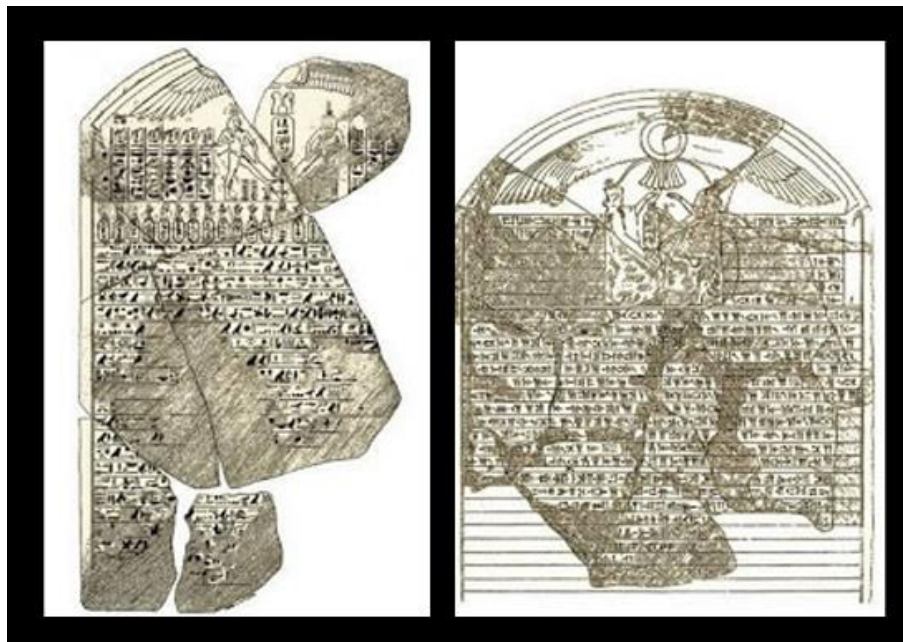
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<sup>81</sup> At first the people of Babylonia rebelled, but this was not the only challenge facing Darius. As soon as he finished his job in Babylonia, he was informed that Martiya in Susiana had rebelled. However, before Darius can send an army to defeat him, the people of Susiana killed Martiya themselves. In Medes, Phraortes started a rebellion. Darius sent a commander named Vidarta to quell that revolt; however, the remarkable resistance of Phraortes forced Darius to personally go into the battle. After quelling the revolt of Phraortes, Darius moved towards Arbela, in a region close to Nineveh to suppress the revolt by Tchitratakhama who would introduce himself as one of the descendants of the Medes kings. Moreover, the revolts of the Parthians and the Hyrcanian peoples in the northeastern and coastal regions of the Caspian Sea were quelled by the hand of the members of Darius' family.

<sup>82</sup> The second most populated city of Libya, which is a port city in the eastern parts of this country.

founded by Cyrus the Great can again be in peace. He reestablished a strong backbone for the unification of the Iranian government.

In epigraphs, Darius considers Ahura Mazda as the source of his authority, and he says, “Ahura Mazda gave me this kingdom. Ahura Mazda helped me to reach this throne, and by the blessing of Ahura Mazda, I am the owner of this kingdom”. This epigraph indicates the religious beliefs of Darius the Great. Another epigraph, found at Tell el-Maskhuta (Fig 22), indicates his polytheistic views, and it has this to say about Darius the Great that he is the son of the Goddess of Intent, the manifestation of Ra, who gave him the throne to finish what he started.



*Figure 22: Darius Epigraph in Suez Canal the Copy of Tell el-Maskhuta- The right-hand side image is the Ancient Persian and Elamite inscription, while the left-hand side image is of the Hieroglyphic inscription from the book “Darius und die Perser” written by Walt*

Another important feature of the period of Darius the Great was the expansion of commerce. At that period, due to the establishment of security, road construction flourished remarkably. One of the most famous roads was the Royal Road from Susa to Sardis. To protect these roads, Darius built castles along the roads and increased

commercial security. Moreover, to establish order and develop the economic system of the country, he legislated tax laws. Darius the Great divided the Iranian Empire into large sections (provinces<sup>83</sup>) and gave each of these provinces to a governor (Satrap) to administer and the governor would be selected by the central government. The governor was responsible for maintaining security, collecting taxes, and supervising the collection of taxes.

#### **2.6.4. Xerxes I (486-465 BC)**

The father of Xerxes I was Darius the Great and his mother was Atossa (the daughter of Cyrus the Great), and it seems that he had the same religion as his ancestors<sup>84</sup>, i.e., he believed in Ahura Mazda as the great god and Mithra and Anahita as other gods<sup>85</sup>. While he was not the oldest son of the king since he was the son of Atossa (the daughter of Cyrus the Great), he had the right to reign, and he ascended to the

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<sup>83</sup> Herodotus claims the number of Iranian provinces to be twenty, but the epigraph of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam indicates that there were thirty provinces (Pirmia, 2007, p 1201). (Fig G)

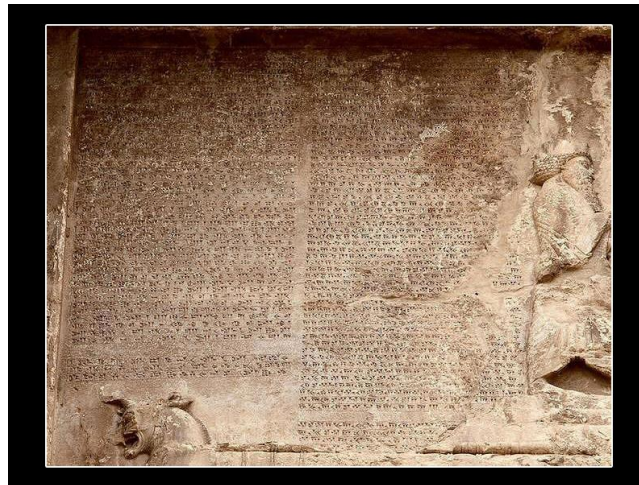


Fig G: Darius' Inscription in Naqsh-e Rostam (<https://iranatlas.info>)

<sup>84</sup> On both sides of the eastern stairs of Apadana Palace, there are two epigraphs of Xerxes I, and after praising Ahura Mazda, who created humans, happiness, and prosperity, he calls himself the King of Kings, the son of Darius the Great. Then, he asks Ahura Mazda and the gods of the people of other countries to protect what he has built.

<sup>85</sup> Herodotus reports that when Xerxes I was on his campaign against Greece and reached Hellespont, he sacrificed a thousand bulls for the Goddess of Athens, poured wine on the ground as a gift to the sun, and gave a gift to the sea since he considered the Greek gods on the same level as Ahura Mazda as the great god and Mithra and Anahita.



throne when he was 35 years old. At first, he faced some difficulties, and without solving them he could not administer his realm. He had to quell the revolt raised in Egypt first. In 484 BC, Xerxes suppressed the revolt of Egypt heavily. Then he decided to attack Greece, so he gathered armies from 46 nations, and he went with them as the commander of the army towards Greece (Shahijani, 2010, p 39).

The first battle, known as Thermopylae, was fought at Thermopylae Valley between the Spartans and the Achaemenid army resulted in the victory of Iran and the death of all the soldiers and the king of Sparta, Leonidas. In the Battle of Artemisium and at the same time as the battle between the ground forces of the Iranian army and the Spartan army at Thermopylae, a little further in the Gulf of Artemisium, the Iranian navy faced a storm and was heavily damaged. With the assumption that Iranians had perished, Themistocles ordered the Greek navy to quickly go there, but Iranians were at the ready. This battle resulted in the defeat of the Greeks and the conquest of Athens by the hands of Xerxes I. However, after this battle, the conditions gradually changed. In the Battle of Salamis, the Iranian and Athenian navies fought at the Gulf of Salamis, and after remarkable resistance from both sides, the army of Xerxes I left the battlefield. Afterward, in the Battle of Plataea, after conquering Athens for the second time (by the hands of Mardonius<sup>86</sup>), the unified armies of Athens, Sparta, and other city-states surrounded and defeated the army of Mardonius. The battle of Mycale was between the Iranian and Greek navies on the same day of the Battle of Plataea resulted in the victory of the Greeks. Herodotus writes, “Based on this defeat of Iran by the hands of the Greek, the hegemony of Iran over the Aegean Sea and Greece was terminated”. At the last battle, known as the Orimidion, the other Iranian navy fleet was defeated by the Greeks, resulting in the independence of some of the Asian Greek city-states from Iran.

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<sup>86</sup> Commander of the Achaemenid army



On the other hand, one of the controversial events of the reign of Xerxes I was created at the time of attacking the Jewish people<sup>87</sup>. Esther<sup>88</sup> and her uncle, Mordecai<sup>89</sup>, planned for a relationship between Esther and Xerxes I to save the Jewish people. The plan was successful and the Jewish people were saved, and the king ordered the killing of the Elamites, and he executed Haman<sup>90</sup> whose position fell into the hands of Mordecai. This resulted in the extreme anger of Elamites with the king. One of the reasons the Iranians were defeated by the Greeks was that the Elamites did not help the Iranians.

Defeat at the hands of the Greeks and the killing of the Elamites led to the dissatisfaction of the prominent figures of Persia with Xerxes I, and they looked down on him. At this time, Artabanus, who was the head of the king's special sentry, plotted against the king, and with the help of a eunuch named Mehrdad, he went to the bedroom of Xerxes I at night and killed him. After killing Xerxes I, Artabanus went to the sons of the king. Darius, the oldest son of Xerxes I, and Ardashir were present at the royal court. The third son, i.e., Vishtaspa was at the province under his rule in Bakhtaran (Balkh). Artabanus informed Ardashir that his oldest brother, i.e., Darius, had killed Xerxes I. Accordingly, Ardashir commanded the execution of Darius, who was the legitimate successor to Xerxes I. In another plot, Artabanus tried to kill Ardashir as well and announced himself to be the king although he was

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<sup>87</sup> It seems that the Elamite Minister of Ceremonies of Xerxes I informed him of the fact that the Jewish people hadn't paid their taxes, encouraging him to attack the Jewish people.

<sup>88</sup> The name Esther is probably derived from Ancient Persian word, Estar, meaning a star. She has also been called Hadassah or Hadish (the Jewish people, such as the heroes of the Book of Daniel, had two names. She was orphaned at childhood and his cousin, Mordecai, became her custodian and raised her. After Vashti, wife of Xerxes I, was deposed of her position, Mordecai convinced the king to marry Esther, and he asked his cousin not to reveal her Jewish origins to the king.

<sup>89</sup> Mordecai was from the Benjamin tribe, who left Jerusalem in 597 BC along with Yeknia (the Jewish king). Mordecai settled in the capital, Susa, and adopted his cousin, Esther, who had lost her father.

<sup>90</sup> Haman was the Elamite prime minister of King Xerxes I. When Mordecai refused to bow down to him, he became suspicious of Jewish people. He was able to convince Xerxes to kill the Jews. However, his plot was ultimately neutralized, and he was killed by the order of the king. Nowadays, Jewish people celebrate the anniversary of the death of Haman (based on the Book of Esther) on Purim.

not a member of the Achaemenid family. However, he lost and died in a direct fight with Ardashir.

### **2.6.5. The Reign of Artaxerxes I until the End of the Achaemenid Empire**

After Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I ascended to the throne in 465 BC and he reigned for about 41 years. During this period, except for a handful of events, nothing important happened. At the beginning of his reign, the second son of Xerxes I and the older brother of Artaxerxes I, i.e. Vishtaspa colluded with the people of Bakhtar and fought Artaxerxes I in the hope of getting on the throne. However, after two battles, he was defeated and killed.

In 424 BC, Artaxerxes I passes away. At the time, about 125 years had passed from the beginning of the Achaemenid Empire, and there had been no wars for more than 20 years. In the west, the convention with Athens was respected by both sides. The ascension of Darius II to the throne results in widespread revolts; however, this issue was an internal conflict among the Iranians themselves who were fighting over the crown. Based on historical documents, Darius II had another adversary, who was his brother Arsites (the son of Ardashir I). Artyphios (one of the officials and administrators of the Achaemenid court and the son of Megabyzus who was a commander in the Achaemenid army) was another individual who started a revolt. However, both of these figures were suppressed. Nonetheless, another revolt against Darius II has been mentioned happened in Pissouthnes in Sardis Province (Waters, 2014, p 181). Nevertheless, the details of these events are scattered, and explaining and they are uncertain topics to be discussed due to the lack of sufficient sources.

The last years of the rule of Darius II resulted in a civil war among his successors, i.e., Artaxerxes II and his younger brother, Cyrus. It quickly became apparent that

the reason Cyrus was trying to wrap up the Peloponnesian War <sup>91</sup>was to gather a Greek mercenary army to help him overthrow his brother (Waters, 2014, p 185). The last years of Darius II, similar to many events that happened during his life, are dark and ambiguous.

After Darius II, Artaxerxes II ascended to the throne. The Greeks have called him ‘Mnemon’, meaning someone who is clever and has a good memory since he had a great memory (Pirnia, 1983, p 141). The reign of Artaxerxes II was characterized by numerous political conspiracies. However, it can be inferred from the writings of Plutarch that despite all the chaos, the behavior of the king was decent and honorable from the point of view of Persians. The kindness and compassion often attributed to him are mainly due to the unusual savagery of his successor, i.e., Artaxerxes III, who had unprecedented cruelty and brutality. Anyways, a person with such a character cannot be expected to spend the last days of his life in bitterness and despair despite the vast power and wealth which were available to him (Zarrinkoob, 1985, 191). Artaxerxes II died when he was 86 years old in December of 359 BC. His rule lasted for 45 years. His tomb in Persepolis is the only monument survived of him.

#### **2.6.6. Darius III**

In 331 BC, Alexander the Great started his military campaign towards Iran, and he defeated Darius II in the Battle of Granicus and the Battle of Issus. Darius announced that he was prepared to give Alexander the Great all the land west of Euphrates, marry his daughter, i.e., Stateira who was held prisoner by the Macedonians, to him, and pay him 10,000 kantars of silver as blood money for the freedom of his family. Based on these conditions, Darius was prepared to sign a peace treaty with Alexander. However, Alexander said that Darius must come to him personally and

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<sup>91</sup> Set of historical wars which occurred from 431 BC to 404 BC between Sparta and Athens, resulting in the destruction of the Athens and the Greek civilization.

acknowledge him as the king of Asia. Accepting such a condition was impossible for Darius. However, Darius was heavily defeated in the Battle of Gaugamela, and ran away from the battle (Fig 23), while Alexander got his hands on the capital of the Achaemenids, i.e., the Persepolis. After completely looting and pillaging Persepolis, Alexander went to Hamedan where he put all the wealth, he got from plundering the treasures of Babylonia, Susa, and Persepolis along with 6,000 Macedonian soldiers, and then, he went after Darius to Parthia (Khorasan). Along with his closest followers, Darius III had gone to the east of Iran from a road on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, to gather enough forces from other regions of the empire to be able to tip the balance of the war in their favor. At that time, Bessus (the Satrap of Balkh) illegally announced himself as the new king of kings, and he arrested and imprisoned Darius who had gone to Balkh. Bessus was going to trade the imprisoned king for a good reward from Alexander. However, when he heard that the Greek commander, Alexander, was getting closer and closer, he panicked, injured Darius, and ran away, and the king died of that injury. Ultimately, Alexander overthrows the Achaemenid Empire and conquered all of Persia.



*Figure 23: Roman Mosaic of the Battle between Alexander and Darius III Pompeii, First Century AD, Naples Archaeological Museum (Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014, p 215)*

However, some reports say that after Artaxerxes IV (Arses of Persia) and Darius III, the reign of the empire got into the hands of the last Achaemenid king, i.e., Artaxerxes V. He was a close relative of Darius III and a descendant of Artaxerxes II, and he was the Achaemenid king for one year after the death of Darius III. The Achaemenid Empire was completely overthrown after the death of Artaxerxes V.

After the death of Alexander in 323 BC, his commander, Seleucus became the king of Iran, which was the beginning of the Seleucid Empire and the Hellenistic period in Iran, which lasted for more than a century and a half. (Fig 24-25)

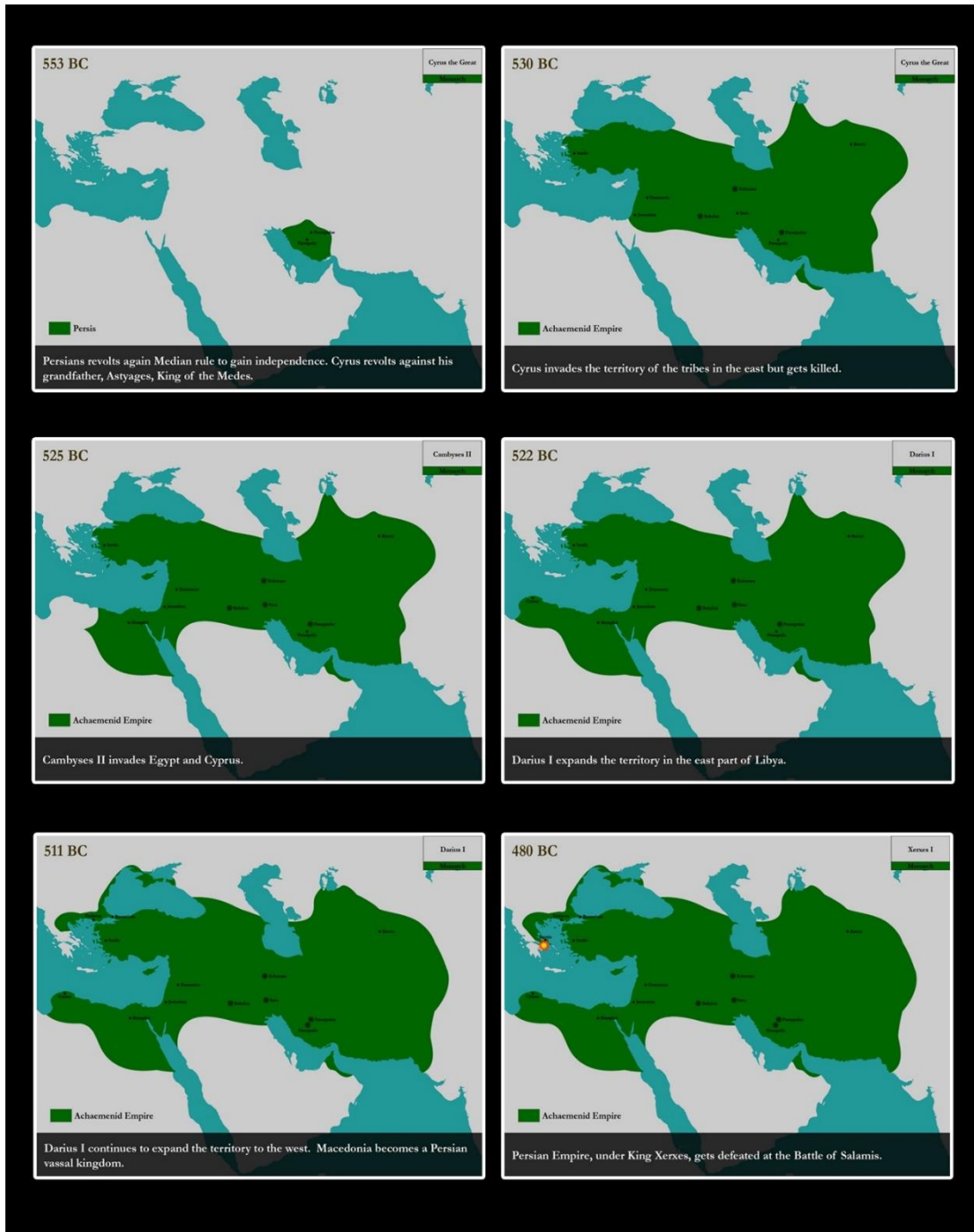


Figure 24: Images of the Conquest and Battles of the Achaemenid Kings (<https://www.ancient.eu>, Published on April 6, 2020, Illustration by Ali Zifan)

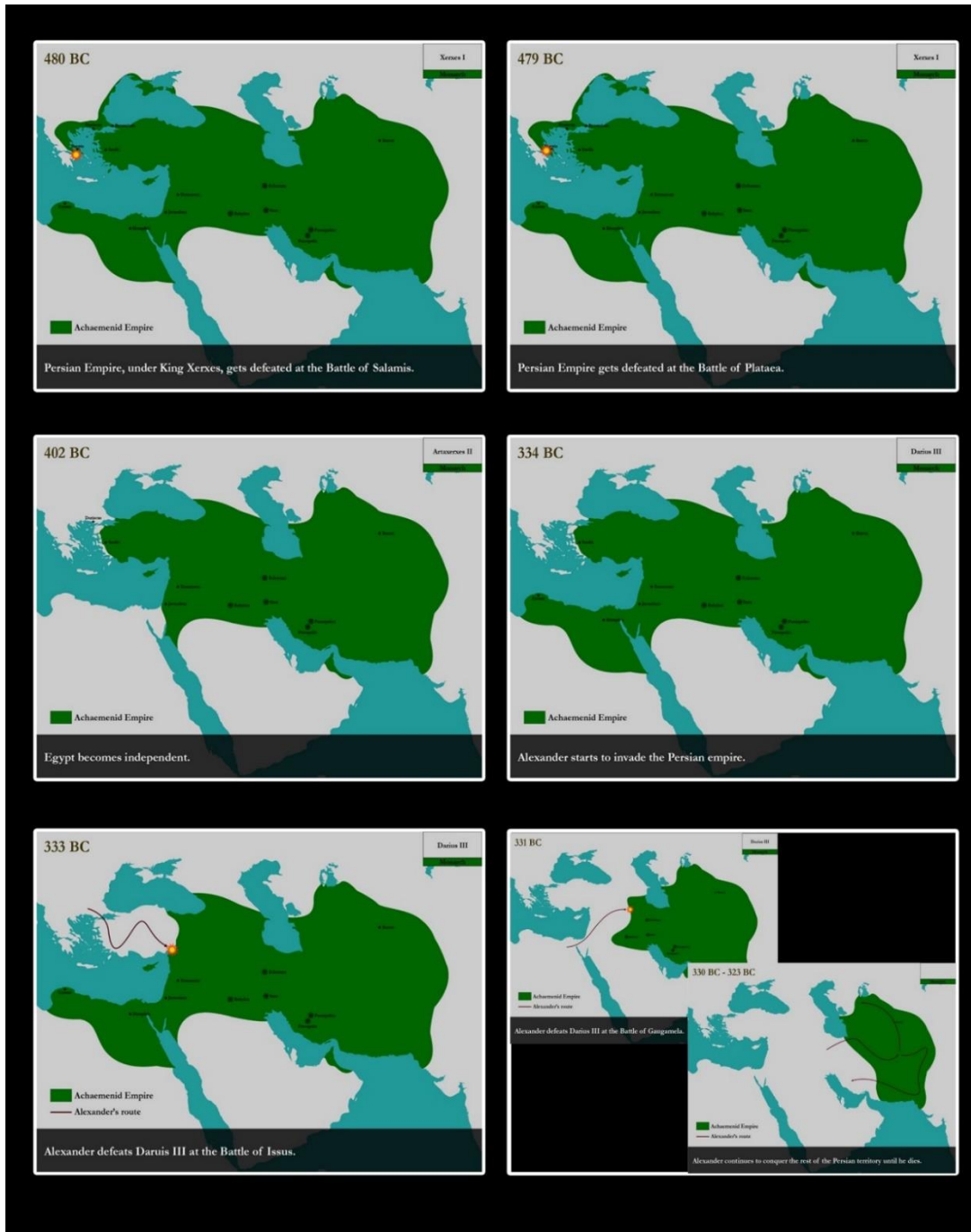


Figure 25: Images of the Conquest and Battles of the Achaemenid Kings (<https://www.ancient.eu>, Published on April 6, 2020, Illustration by Ali Zifan)

## **2.7. Factors Affecting the Will and Reign of the Kings**

During the Achaemenid period, the king had absolute power in appearance. This did not mean that he authoritatively exerted his power; rather, he was considered as one of the creations of Ahura Mazda, and he reigned over the land with help from Ahura Mazda. Therefore, he had to abide by the divine ethical and political rules of the god who raised him to such a level (Mehregan, 1972, p 38-39). Under such conditions, other factors, including the nobles, the clerics, and the women of the court, could influence the king as well.

### **2.7.1. The Nobles**

The nobles were the heads of the initial Aryan tribes and the great figures of Persian families. They acted like a mediator between the people and the court, and they were involved in the administration of the country. Accordingly, the authority and legitimacy of the king would be maintained if he were able to gather the Persian nobles around himself and establish relations with them (Brian, 1980, Second Ed, p 1606).

For instance, after the death of Cambyses II and in the course of the unsuccessful reign of Bardya, the extent of the involvement of Persian nobles and tribe leaders in the political affairs of the country became more prominent than ever before. They plotted a conspiracy together and killed Gaumāta, and appointed Darius I for the Achaemenid throne as the successor of Cambyses II (Gershevitch, 1933, p 217).

### **2.7.2. Women of the Court**

One of the manifestations and characteristics of any advanced civilization has always involved the way women were treated and their rights were respected. In ancient Persian societies, this principle was always followed, and the position, authority, and dignity of women were always considered important matters. This was so important that in Avesta, a woman is considered as an important pillar of



human society, and she is equal to a man in terms of all her social rights and religious rituals (Irani, 1955, p 47). In ancient Persia, women were recognized based on descriptions such as good, scientific, coach, a manifestation of love and kindness, and the culmination of the beauty of creation, and women were highly respected (Orang, 1958, p 310). Plutarch writes, “Even the great kings of Persia always respected the Medes queen, and when eating, she was sitting at the head of the table, while the king would sit down from her” (Pirnia, 1983, p 1466). In a nutshell, women had property rights, they could testify, they could work as prosecutors and judges, and they could even become queens and take the reins of the government (Durant, 1958, p 552).

Based on the tradition governing the Achaemenid period, the queens were the heads of the inner courts, and they had the right to wear crowns. They would always try to directly influence the royal affairs. Darius the Great consulted with Atossa<sup>92</sup> about the administrative and fateful affairs of the land, and he fully trusted her. When Darius the Great organized a military campaign to conquer a region, a royal council would form to administer the affairs of the country, and the head of the council and the one with authority over all the others was Queen Atossa. With regards to her political life, Herodotus says, “Atossa possessed a remarkable level of power and she was interested in accompanying her husband in battle. She was always the intellectual companion of Darius the Great, she commanded several great battles herself, or she would provide the action plan for such battles. Her influence was so great that one of the main causes of Darius I attacking Greece was the suggestion of his wife” (Herodotus, 1989, p 256). At this period, the king was able to have several wives and concubines; however, only one of these women would play the main role,

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<sup>92</sup> Atossa, the queen of Persia, is one of the most influential women in the history of ancient Persia. She is the daughter of Cyrus the Great and Cassandane, she is the sister of Cambyses, and the wife of two Achaemenid kings, i.e., Cambyses and Darius I, and she is the mother of Xerxes I.

and this woman was the queen herself. In the royal hierarchy, the queen and the queen's mother were at the top of the ladder. The tablets obtained from Persepolis include references to women of the royal court, including Irtashduna<sup>93</sup> and Irdabama<sup>94</sup>. These women supervised some of the important regions and properties, and they had a lot of servants and wealth (Waters, 2014, p 117).

### 2.7.3. The Clergy

The life of the king was effectively limited in the framework of religious taboos (Adi, 1995, p 72). Throughout history, whenever the clergy were in the opportune moment, they would act as an adjusting factor for the power of the kings, and sometimes they would claim the throne. Whenever they desired, they could increase the extent of their influence to a level that they could remove and install kings. The conditions of that period were such that the objections from religious leaders would result in sinister outcomes for the kings (Rezagholi, 1998, p 47). (Fig 26)



*Figure 26: The line drawing of two magi holding barsom in front of the temple Istanbul Museum (The World of Achaemenid Persia, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 238)*

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<sup>93</sup> Queen Irtashduna was one of the royal women during the reign of Darius the Great.

<sup>94</sup> Irdabama is one of the most prominent female employers, whose name has been referenced many times in various texts and documents. She had a lot of property and a personal seal. Having such a seal means that Irdabama was most likely one of the close family relations of the royal family.

## 2.8. Satrapies and Capitals of the Achaemenid Empire

Due to the sheer scope of the geographical area of the Achaemenid Empire, after Cyrus the Great and Cambyses II, Darius the Great divided the country into numerous Satrapies<sup>95</sup> (provinces) to better administer the affairs of the land. The number of satrapies varied during the time. This king established 20 satrapies in his realm, and each one had to pay a specific amount of tax to the king. This tax would take the form of coins, horses, other products, and valuable objects (Burgan, 2010, p 80). The geographical distribution of satrapies can help us better understand the cultural and artistic impacts of the Achaemenids and the national and local identity of these tribes and ethnic groups. These divisions can be evaluated based on stone tablets (Behistun Inscription) and the carvings of the Achaemenid period (carvings on the southern front of the eastern staircase, the reliefs on the statue of Darius discovered in Susa, and the epigraph in the tomb of Darius in Naqsh-e Rostam (Waters, 2014, p 124-126; Velayati, 2011, p 43). (Fig 27)



Figure 27: The Map of the Achaemenid Satrapies (<https://www.pinterest.com>)

<sup>95</sup> Satrapy is a Greek word derived from (Khashtar Paveh in ancient Persian) which means a state or province. In Modern Persian, it can be written as “Shahr” (city), and at that time they used this term to refer to the whole land. Each satrapy would cover an area formed during a long historical period, whose residents were cohesive from an anthropological point of view, i.e., in terms of culture, rituals, and traditions.

Some of these satrapies include the following:

**Ecbatana<sup>96</sup>:** This ancient city was the first capital city of Persia. Herodotus believes that this city was built by Deioces<sup>97</sup>, and he says the city had seven walls, each colored with a color of one of the planets. Before the Achaemenids, Ecbatana was the capital of the Medes, and along with other regions under their control, it fell to the hands of Cyrus the Great in 550 BC. From then on, the Achaemenids would spend their summers in Ecbatana (Shahijani, 2010, p 51).

**Anshan:** For a long time, this was a great city, and it was considered one of the capital cities of Iran before the Achaemenids. At the beginning of the reign of Cyrus the Great and his precedents, it was briefly the capital; however, after Cyrus conquered Ecbatana and Babylonia, Anshan lost its former glory and importance.

**Pasargadae<sup>98</sup>:** Pasargadae was the first Achaemenid capital whose construction is attributed to Cyrus the Great. The name Pasargadae is derived from the name of the tribe of the Persian kings; namely the Pasargadae tribe (Shahbazi, 2000, p 22). The entire buildings of Pasargadae, i.e., the throne of Cyrus the Great, were constructed in an area with a length of 2.5 km, located 40 km from Persepolis and 90 km to the northeast of Shiraz. The Pasargadae plain <sup>99</sup>is about 20km long and 15km wide. In ancient times, it was full of greenery and trees, and the royal gardens were irrigated by stone streams and fountains. According to historians, such as Xenophon and Strabo, the palaces and the tomb of Cyrus the Great were among the dense trees of this garden. This site includes buildings, such as the tomb of Cyrus the Great, the

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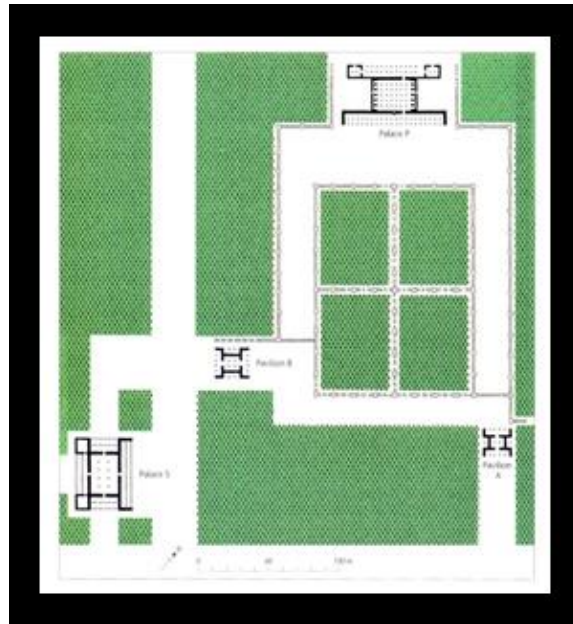
<sup>96</sup> The ancient name of the City of Hamedan among the Persians during the time of the Medes and the Achaemenids. This city, along with Athens in Greece and Rome in Italy, is one of the handful of ancient cities of the world which are still alive and important.

<sup>97</sup> Deioces was one of the Medes. People knew him as wise and just. King Deioces chose Hamedan (Ecbatana) as his capital city, and on a hill, he constructed seven intertwined strongholds, each with its unique color. Deioces was the king of Iran for 53 years, and he was able to establish a historical union among various branches of the Aryan race.

<sup>98</sup> Nowadays, it is located in Pasargad City District, Fars Province of Iran.

<sup>99</sup> Located in the green plains of Murghab plain (Stronach, 2000, p 804).

tomb of Cambyses II, Tal Takht defense strongholds, Mozafari Caravansary, the Sacred Enclosure, and Balaghi Valley <sup>100</sup>(Fig 28).



*Figure 28: The Plan for Pasargadae along with Palaces, Gardens, and Stone Streams (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 30).*

**Babylonia<sup>101</sup>:** the name of the ethnic group and the city of Babylonia in ancient Persian is Babaria. The Babylonian term Bab Ilo, meaning the door or palace of God, has been referenced (2007, p147). Lecoq, this city was an ancient capital conquered by Cyrus the Great in 539 BC. Since then, the Achaemenid royals would spend their fall and winter in this city. This satrapy was divided into two parts at the time of Darius .

**Elam:** in the Elamite version of Behistun Inscription, the name of Elam is mentioned as Hal Hatmati, meaning the Sacred Land. The capital of this satrapy was the city of

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<sup>100</sup> This site is the fifth site registered in the list of World Heritage Sites of Iran, which was registered in UNESCO session held in June 2004 in China. It was recognized since it met numerous criteria and it was registered in the List of World Heritage Sites by unanimous vote.

<sup>101</sup> Babylonia was an Acadian city built in Mesopotamia in 1867 BC by the Amorites Dynasty. The ruins of this city are located in Babylon Governorate in modern Iraq, 85 km to the south of Baghdad. This city has completely been destroyed, and the only remains include some of the destroyed clay and bricks. This city was built on the banks of Euphrates.

Susa<sup>102</sup>. Many researchers believe that Susa was the administrative capital of the Achaemenid Empire. Until the reign of Darius, Ecbatana was considered as the capital of Persia; however, Darius named Susa as the spring capital of the Achaemenids and the center of the country, while he made Babylonia the winter capital and Ecbatana the summer capital. In Susa, Darius constructed a great and elegant palace for public audiences<sup>103</sup> with the king (Shahbazi, 1977, p 30). This city, which was one of the most important capitals of the Achaemenids, was connected to Sardinia and Persepolis through a great road called the Royal Road.

**Persepolis (Pārsa)**<sup>104</sup>: The westerners called it Persepolis, meaning the city of the Persians; and in classic sources, it was called Persis; in Ancient Persian inscriptions, it was called “Pārsa”; and in Assyrian sources, it was called Parsua, Parsuash, and Parsumash (Lecoq, 2007, p 148). During the consequent years, Persepolis was the elegant and ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire during the Achaemenid period. This city includes a building called “Taxt e Jamšīd” (the Throne of Jamshid), which was built during the reign of Darius the Great, Xerxes I, and Artaxerxes I, and for 50 years, it was a place for organizing rituals and feasts, especially the Nowruz ceremonies.

**The City of Estakhr:** Similar to Ecbatana, Susa, and Rey, Estakhr was a populated and flourishing city, and from the time of the Achaemenids until the fourth century AH, it was a center for commerce and exchange. This city had strong towers and ramparts which were ruined as time passed by. The name Estakhr was first read from the epigraph on the southern veranda of Tachara Palace. After burning and sacking

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<sup>102</sup> Currently, shush (Susa) is a city with an area of 6.5 square km, located 24 km to the south west of Dezful City in Khuzestan Province of Iran.

<sup>103</sup> Public Audience is a tradition in which the king and the royal court administrators allow a group of people to visit the court and talk to the king.

<sup>104</sup> Taxt e Jamšīd (the Throne of Jamshid), Pārsa, Persepolis, located in the north of Marvdasht City District in the Northeastern part of modern-day Fars Province. This tourist attraction and historical site is 50 km away from the capital of Fars Province; namely Shiraz.

Persepolis, this city maintained its former position and prosperity for a while gradually losing its importance. In addition to being a center for commerce, this city was the place for storing and keeping scientific and religious works and books as well.

**Medes:** Medes is one of the satrapies mentioned in the tenth row of Behistun Inscription, the third row of Susa Inscription, and afterward, in all the Achaemenid inscriptions on the second row after Persepolis. In the patterns observed in Apadana Palace, a Median individual is distinguished from others with a round felt hat and two short Median swords (Saeidi, 1996, 79).

**Armenia (Armina):** The Armenia satrapy was the same place the Assyrians called Nairi. However, ancient Persian and Elamite texts refer to the place as Armina. According to the available sources, the Armenians wholeheartedly resisted the attacks of Darius the Great, which reflects their union and friendship with the Medes (Toynbee, 2000, p 49).

**Cappadocia:** This satrapy was located in the east of Asia Minor, and the north of Cilicia, between the Halys River and the Euphrates, and it extended to the Black Sea. This satrapy was divided into two parts, i.e., Great Cappadocia and Small Cappadocia (Malekzadeh, 1972, p 20).

**Parthia:** It seems that this satrapy included Hyrcania (modern-day Gorgan).

**Scythians:** Scythians were people living in northern Iran. The land of the Scythians is considered to be the east of the Caspian Sea, and the Achaemenid inscriptions refer to these people with emphasis (Koch, 2006, p124). They were somewhat considered as the representatives of people living in the northern parts of the Black Sea to Central Asia (Koch, 2001, p 34).

**Yedona:** The Greeks were considered a satrapy in the list of Herodotus.

The other satrapies of the Achaemenid period include: Arabāya (Arabia), Mudrāya (Egypt), Zarang (Sistan), Herat, Khwarazm, Bakhtar, Safad, Gandhara (Kandahar), Tatgush (Satgidi), Makran, and Sardinia (Lydia) which was divided into two parts by Cyrus the Great, the capital of one was in Sardinia and that of the other was in Dascylium (Ehtesham, 1976, p 137)

### **2.8.1. Remaining Sites from the Achaemenid Period**

Nowadays, sites related to the Achaemenid period are found in various geographical locations of this great empire. To get a better understanding of this empire, these sites need to be evaluated and studied. Some of these sites are listed in the following.

**Lidoma:** This site is located in Mamasani County in Fars Province. Lidoma is the name of one of the cities mentioned in the Achaemenid texts (Mohaghegh, 2011, p 11). At the time, it was located on a highway between Persepolis and Susa. The city was probably built in 550 BC. Its total area is about five hectares (500 × 1000 square meters). After the discovery of clay tablets in Persepolis, and their analysis by George Cameron, a list of 13 Achaemenid cities located in the Mamasani region of Fars Province were found among these tablets, and Lidoma was one of these listed cities (Fig 29).





*Figure 29: Lidoma site Lidoma is a site explored in archeological excavations in 2006 by an Iranian archeological team under the supervision of Alireza Asgari from Iran and Professor Daniel Potts from the University of Sydney.*

**Tomb Bot:** Tomb Bot is located 40km to the north of Bandar Siraf in the coastal plains of the Persian Gulf, and it is 500 m higher than the sea level. This site is located in a foothill in the northeastern parts of the coastal plains of Lamerd on the piedmont of Tang Siah Mountain with a distance of 100 m from the north of Shaldan Village (Asgari Javerdi, 2013, p 160). The area of this site (which sits on a farm) along with the surrounding area reaches 5 to 7 hectares. During recent years, due to plowing the farmland, several stone elements have been discovered, the most important of which include three cube-shaped chapiters, three animal-hybrid chapiters, one half-body, and the head of a bird (Fig 30).



*Figure 30: Tomb Bot site Tomb Bot, one of the archeological sites remained from the Achaemenid palaces in Mohr County in Fars Province*

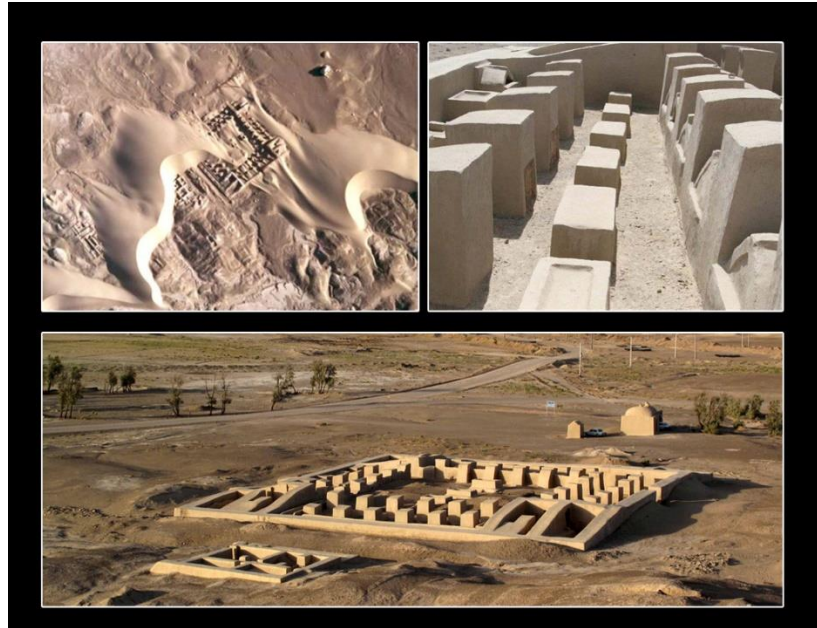
**Borazjan:** The city of Borazjan has located 67 km from Bushehr and 226 km from Shiraz. The discovery of the Borazjan Achaemenid Site occurred when the water utility organization was digging the area to lay pipes (Saidi Sirjani, 1990, p 368) (Fig 31).



*Figure 31: Borazjan Achaemenid Site*

**Dahan-e Gholaman:** Dahan-e Gholaman is located at a distance of 2 km from Ghale Nou Village in Zahak City District in the Sistan Section of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, and it is 30 km to the southeast of Zabol. The remains discovered in this city consists of the main building and several individual buildings. This site first

attracted the attention of archeologists in 1960, when various excavations and research started in this site to gain a better understanding of this historical region (Fig 32).



*Figure 32: Dahan-e Gholaman site Umberto Scerrato, one of the archeologists and researchers of the Italian Institution of Middle and the Far East managed to discover Dahan-e Gholaman*

**Sayda or Sidon:** Sidon was one of the cities of the Phoenician government. This city, located 35 km to the north of Tyre and 40 km to the south of Beirut in Lebanon, was an important political and maritime center during the Iron Age and the Persian era, and it was the headquarters of a dynasty of local kings. There are few Achaemenid remains in the modern city of Sidon including a two-headed bull protome made of white marble (Fig 33) indicating the presence of building methods similar to the style used in Apadana Palace.





Figure 33: Persian-style Bull Protome Found in Sidon Lebanon (*Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 41*)

**Gumbati:** the remains of a historical building from the fifth or early fourth century BC were discovered in the Alasani Valley in the easternmost region of Georgia in an area known as ‘Gumbati’. The floor area of this building is about  $40 \times 4$  square meters. It can be assumed that that building had two pillared halls or verandas; one hall to the west and one main hall in the center. There is no doubt that this building with such dimensions and archeological ornaments was an administrative building at first. The roots of such historical and monumental architecture go back to the royal palaces in Persepolis and Susa. Based on the archeological plan and the small artifacts discovered in this building, it is likely that the huge building in Gumbati was the residence of a Persian authority or local ruler, who would pay taxes to the King of Kings. Nonetheless, this is sufficient evidence for the presence of the Achaemenids in this region (Fig 34).

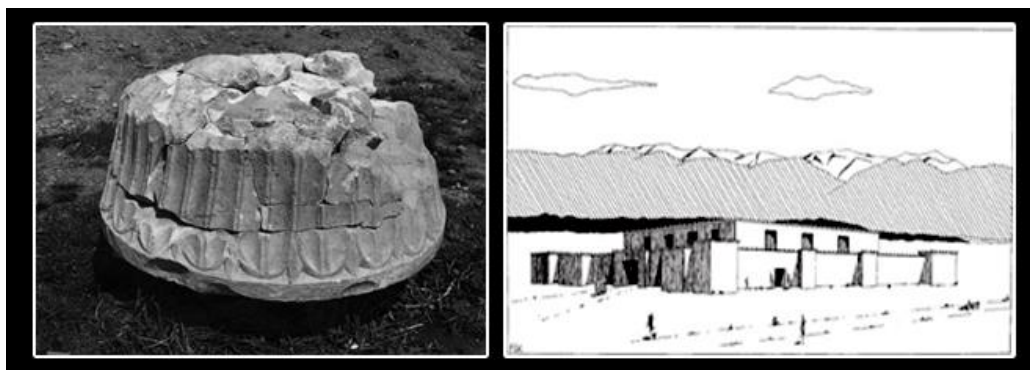


Figure 34: Palace in Gumbati site (Left) Column Base; (Right) Reconstruction of the Palace

**Karacamirli:** Karacamirli is located in South Caucasus in Ghorban Teppe in Azerbaijan. A brick wall with lime glaze with a height of 1.70 m was discovered on this site. The lime material and the construction style for some of the details on this column base indicate that they were most probably built in the same workshop which built the bell-shaped column bases of Gumbati, 60 km to the north of this location. The ceiling of the hall was supported using wooden timbers placed on bell-shaped column bases which were built from limestone. These bases are decorated with vertical leaves and a crescent base (Taurus). The height of the column bases is about 60 cm (Fig 35).

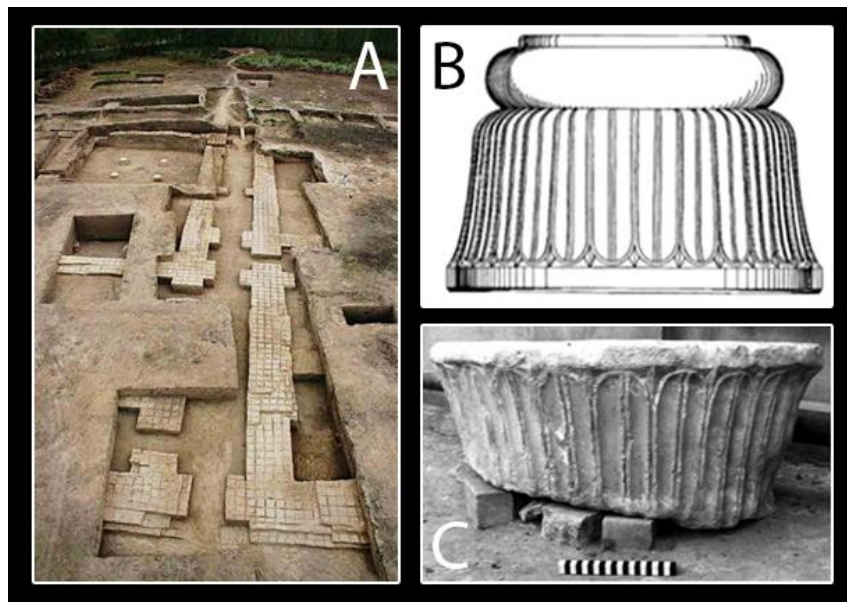


Figure 35: Ghorban tappe site a-Ghorban Teppe, North-South Corridor (Knauss et al., 2013, p 13); b- Column Base in Karacamirli (Babaev et al., 2007, p 40); c- Column Base, Karačamirli Village (Babaev et al., 2007, p 33)

**Kakheti:** This site is located 113 km to the southeast of Tbilisi, close to the border of Azerbaijan, in Alazani Valley in Gombasti Region. During the excavations in this site, the remains of a historical building were discovered, which was built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century or early 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The area of the ground floor of the building is estimated to be 40 × 40 m.

**Sari Tappeh:** In the late 1950s, Ideal Nərimanov supervised archaeological excavations in an archeological site known as Sari Tappeh. This site is located in the new city of Qazax, in Noura Village, in the Republic of Azerbaijan. He excavated the western section of a building that is similar to the Achaemenid palaces. Two bell-shaped pillar bases kept at Baku Historical Museum, and clay pots, reinforce this notion. The shape of the column bases is similar to the shape of column bases in Susa and Persepolis. Moreover, a similar base was discovered in Gumbati as well (Knauss, 2017, p 131-132; Ghadim Iravani and Beikzadeh, 2006, p 96-97) (Fig 36).

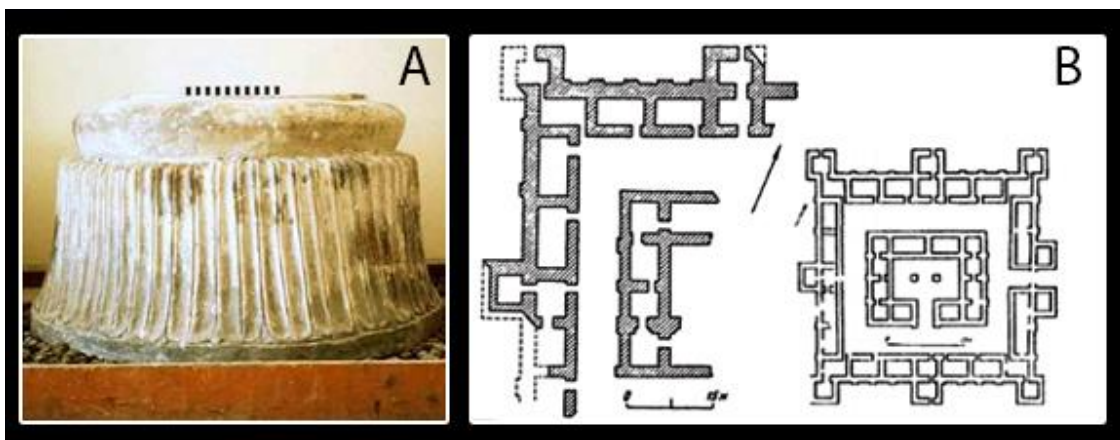


Figure 36: Sari Tappeh site Column Base in Sari Tappeh (Knauss et al., 2013, p 5); b- Plan for Sari Tappeh Palace (Khatchadourian, 2008, p 441)

**Zikhia-Gora:** This site is located in southeastern Georgia, southwest of Samadlou. Extensive archeological excavations have been carried out on a hill called Zikhia-Gora. Many archeologists believe this was a temple. There was a set of buildings on this hill, which were surrounded by stone walls with rectangular watchtowers. In this site, parts of a bell-shaped pillar base were found which are very similar to the one found in Gumbati. The famous bull-shaped chapter constructed in the third or second century BC was found in a building that was also used as a fire temple. It seems that these Achaemenid chapters mimic those of Persepolis and Susa (Fig 37).

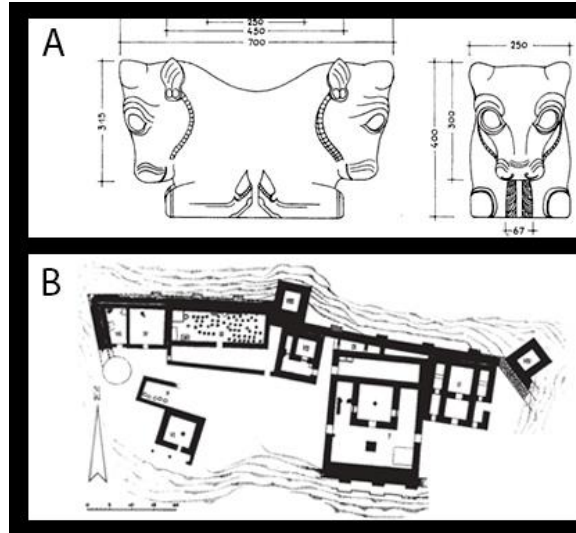


Figure 37: Zikhia-Gora site a- Chapter, Zikhia-Gora (Knauss, 2006, p 93); b- Plan of the Zikhia-Gora Temple (Knauss, 2006, p 108)

**Benjamin:** This site is located about 10 km southwest of Gyumri in northwestern Armenia. During the 1980s, Felix Termartirossov discovered several historical artifacts in a site called Benjamin. (Fig 38)



Figure 38: Benjamin site Column Base in Benjamin (Florian Knauss, Ancient Persian, and the Caucasus)

**Babylon:** The ruins of the city of Babylonia are now located 85 km south of Baghdad, along the road from Baghdad to Hillah. After living in Babylonia (in Nabopolassar Palace), Darius the Great constructed his palace on the southern



rampart (west of Nabopolassar Palace) (Olmstead, 2001, p 24). Cyrus annexed Babylonia in 539 BC to the Achaemenid Empire. While Babylonia was one of the main capitals of the Achaemenids, they did not construct a lot of accommodation there, and they continued using the old Babylonian palaces. However, Artaxerxes I ordered the construction of a small palace with a length of 34.80 meters and a width of 20.5 meters using a completely Persian style on Kasra Hill in the west of the southern castle (Curtis, 2019, p 40). In 331 BC, this city was conquered by Alexander the Great, who intended to make it the capital city of its empire (Fig 39).



*Figure 39: Babylonia site Panorama View of Reconstructed Sections in the Ancient City of Babylonia in Hillah, Iraq*

## **2.9. Celebrations**

In the Persian culture, the term celebrations often refer to two types of occasions; one is a gathering for joy and feasting, and the other is Eid (or festival). It seems that in ancient Persia, the majority of celebrations, or at least the most important celebrations, had a religious aspect and importance. In such celebrations, the gods would be praised and worshiped. Therefore, they used to call all the sacred days and Eids “feasts”.

In essence, a feast meant a group ritual for celebrating a historical or religious event which was always accompanied by special rituals, particularly group singing and praying. There is not a host of information available about the date of the formation



of such feasts, and in the Iranian narratives, especially the Zoroastrian tradition, the Persian feasts are attributed to the very ancient Persian world, even before the time of Zoroaster.

The life of people in ancient Persia was filled with elegant feasts and large-scale singing. Shahbazi states, “The main sources of entertainment for the Persians included hunting, war drills, games, dancing, singing, playing music, and so on” (Shahbazi, 1977, p 51). The Persians were the first nation to celebrate birthdays, and during the Achaemenid era, an individual’s birthday was more important than any other day for him/her, and he/she would celebrate it.

In ancient times, there were a significant number of feasts on various days of the year, the majority of which were held due to the name of the day coinciding with the name of the month, and the good omen of this symmetry would be celebrated. Each of these feasts belonged to one of the gods of the Ancient Persians, and they were considered somewhat important in the society and celebrated by the majority of people before Islam. Some of the most important instances of these feasts are discussed below.

### **2.9.1. Nowruz**

Nowruz celebrations are held on the first day of the first month of the Persian calendar, i.e., Farvardin. It is called Nowruz, meaning the New Day, since it is the beginning of the New Year (Biruni, 1988, p 253). Undoubtedly, Nowruz was the most important religious and national feast of the Persians. While Avesta does not mention Nowruz, other texts that remained from pre-Islamic Persia mention this feast multiple times and consider it as a religious feast and celebration. In ancient Persian and Arabic writings, various stories are told about the genesis of the Nowruz

celebrations, the majority of which attributes its foundation to Jamshid<sup>105</sup>, the Pishdadian king of Persia. It is said that when Jamshid built a throne and used it to go into the heavens, people marveled at this feat and they became overjoyed and celebrated (Biruni, 1988, p 327). Nowruz is known as a public celebration in the Iranian and Mesopotamian culture, and the Nowruz rituals are considered an ancient and very common tradition since the third century BC in the region. Nowadays, Nowruz<sup>106</sup> is the only remaining feast among the feasts and celebrations of Ancient Persia, which is still celebrated among almost all Iranian ethnic groups.

At the time of the Achaemenids, the Nowruz rituals would likely be held in Persepolis, where the king would offer presents to and receive presents from the public. The carvings on the walls of Persepolis, depicting the representatives of various realms under the reign of the Achaemenids as they present their gifts, are a testament to the fact that the Nowruz celebrations were held in a highly elegant manner during the Achaemenid era (Bolukbashi, 2002, p 25).

### **2.9.2. Ordibeheshtgan**

The third day of the month Ordibehesht (the second month of the Persian calendar) is named after the god of fire, and on this day, the Ordibeheshtgan celebrations would be held. In the modern calendar, this day is the second day of this month. There is not much information about the details of this feast during ancient times; however, since Ordibehesht is the god of fire, it seems that in the past, such a feast

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105 Jamshid or Jam is one of the most famous figures in the stories of ancient Persia, and his background even goes back to the Indo-Iranian era as well.

106 Nowruz celebration is one of the official celebrations in Iran, and it is in fact the most important celebration. Moreover, in two other countries with Iranian culture and language; namely, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Nowruz is considered a national celebration, even though sometimes some events prevent such rituals. In addition, Nowruz is considered a national and official feast in Azerbaijan as well.

would be held in Fire Temples. Continuing the ancient tradition, the modern Zoroastrians hold this feast by going to fire temples and singing specific prayers.

### **2.9.3. Tirgan**

On 13 of Tir, which is named after Tir or Teshtar, i.e., one of the important gods of ancient Persia, there is a festival called Tirgan. The majority of historical sources say that this festival is a celebration of the event of the story of Arash the Archer<sup>107</sup>. Since at the time of war, people did not have much food, in remembrance of those days, people would bake wheat<sup>108</sup> on Tirgan festival and ate fruits. This feast would be held in Iran and the neighboring lands with utmost elegance in open spaces in nature. However, as time went by, its importance gradually decreased, and it was later only celebrated in a handful of regions with some changes in the rituals.

### **2.9.4. Mehregan**

One of the largest Persian festivals would be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Mehr named after the well-known god of ancient Persia. Many narratives are telling the story of the foundation of the Mehregan festival. Biruni states that this day was called Mehrgan since the sunlight first appeared to the people of the world on this day (Biruni, 1998, p 337). The most famous narrative about the reason for celebrating this day says that on this day, Fereydun<sup>109</sup> overcame Zahhak<sup>110</sup> and

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107 One of the ancient Iranian myths and the name of the main hero of the myth. Arash was one of the archers in the army of Manuchehr, and after the war between Iran and Turan, he was selected as the Persian archer to determine the border between Iran and Turan. Then, Arash goes to the summit of Mount Damavand, puts the arrow in the bow, and shoots the arrow. Arash spends all his existence and ability in shooting that arrow, and after he shoots the arrow, he dies of exhaustion. His corpse falls to pieces which are then scattered over all of Iran and his soul accompanies the arrow. The arrow travels from dawn until sunset, and it strikes a walnut tree along Amu Darya or the Oxus River, which becomes the border between Iran and Turan.

108 With regards to baking wheat, it is said that it was because when people were under siege, they had to eat baked wheats since they couldn't turn it into flour (Gardrizi, 1984, p 518).

109 One of the most prominent mythical figures of Persia. He was the son of Abtin and one of the descendants of Jamshid who overcame the tyrannical Zahhak with help from Kaveh the Blacksmith.

110 In the Avesta, he is referred to as Aži Dahāka, which means an evil snake. After killing his own father, he ascended to the throne. The Persians who were discontented by the tyranny of Jamshid, the king of Persia, went to Zahhak and

imprisoned him in Mount Damavand (Gardrizi, 1984, p 520). Similar to Nowruz, this festival would last for six days until the 21<sup>st</sup> day called the Great Mehregan. Mehr who is considered a god in India and Europe was very popular in a period of history, and Mithraism, which was the religion of worshiping Mehr, first flourished among the armies of the east and then went to the west. In the west, the worshipers of Mithra (Mehr) would celebrate one of the days of the year as his birthday, which was on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December in Rome. After the expansion of Christianity, this festival was changed to Christmas, and it can be said that this day is the same as the Mehregan festival.

Due to the importance of Mehr (Mithra) in the Achaemenid era, it can be inferred that his festival would be organized most elaborately and elegantly. For the Achaemenids, the Mehregan festival was held for Mehr (the God of Covenant). On the day of Mehregan, people would celebrate, dance, and drink wine. This was the only day when the king could openly drink and dance (Shahbazi, 1977, 52). However, with the invasion of Alexander the Great, this cultural phenomenon lost its importance for a while. There are some accounts of the revival of this festival during the era of the Parthian Empire, and it has been said that on this day, the king would organize a Public Audience and the nobles would present some gifts to the king (al-Tha'ālibī, 1989, p 297). Nowadays, the Mehregan festival is only held among the Zoroastrians, and on this day, they go to temples to celebrate.

#### **2.9.5. Sepandārmazgān**

This is the day of women, earth, and lovers. This is one of the holidays of ancient Iran that happens on the 5th day of the last month of the Shamsi calendar and has

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elected him as their king. The Devil who is an assistant to Zahhak kisses the shoulders of Zahhak and two snakes grew out of the spots he kissed. After this event, the Devil tells Zahhak that each day, he has to feed the snakes the brains of two young men so as they do not hurt him.

roots in the Achaemenid monarchy. It is said that on this day ancient Iranians would give gifts that they could afford to their virtuous and humble wives, and female relatives to thank them for what they have done in the previous year. The women celebrated by wearing new clothes and shoes. Women who were virtuous, kind, and righteous and had given birth to good children were appreciated. On this day women would not do work in the house and the men and boys would do housework. Another name can be found for this day that has its traditions. On this day another tradition happened called “Mardgiran”. In this day women who were ready to marry could choose their life partner and husband. Therefore, this tradition was called Mardgiran (loosely meaning obtaining man). This can be considered valentine’s day.

### **3. Symbols and Signs**

In ancient civilizations and cultures, civilization was the context for the manifestation of beliefs and thoughts, and the people of the time used this venue to express their needs and intentions. Symbols are mainly significations of the unconscious and move from an appreciable and tangible image to a transcendental and supernatural one. Primitive humans transformed their desires and ideals into symbolic representations, and through several rituals and traditions, which also had a symbolic aspect, tried to obtain the desired perfection. The symbol was considered as signifying the relationship between human beings and the higher-dimension worlds. The best way to understand a symbol is to understand how traditional civilizations treated the symbols and the concepts expressed by these symbols since, in such societies, the symbol was not just a brief and short expression; rather, such symbols defined the relationships and interactions between the signifier and the signified, the man and the Gods, and the like (Cooper, 2000, p1). In effect, the symbol was the representation of a thought or a concept, which could move from its

materialistic appearance to its transcendental meaning. On the other hand, in ancient communities and civilizations, the symbolism was a religious and ritualistic phenomenon, and it had a direct relationship with ontology and the gods. The language of symbols is global and universally understood; hence, symbols and symbolism try to promote unison and eliminate plurality.

In ancient Persia, especially during the Achaemenid period, since life and art were not considered as two separate phenomena, the beliefs and views of the people were represented in their artistic creations, especially their industry. Therefore, investigating and understanding these artistic works will not only help understand the aesthetic aspects of these artifacts but will also reveal another dimension of the life of ancient civilizations which covers the symbols and the concepts latent in such symbols.

### **3.1. Man**

One of the most important subjects in Achaemenid art involves displaying and depicting the figure of human beings, especially the figure of the king. In the Achaemenid reliefs, due to the conscious attempt to make the image of the king closely represent the image of God, instead of depicting personal features and inherent defects, an ideal figure and appearance are created by simplifying the forms. The simplified figures and the linear folds of the clothes transform anatomic forms into an atmosphere where shadows are rare, and it seems that scattered light is present in the artistic work. The carved faces on stones in Achaemenid art are not there to simulate; rather, they show humanistic features in a way to express their elegance (i.e., idealization), and at the first sight, all faces might seem identical (contractual), which can be distinguished based on the arrangement of the hair (Fig 40-41).

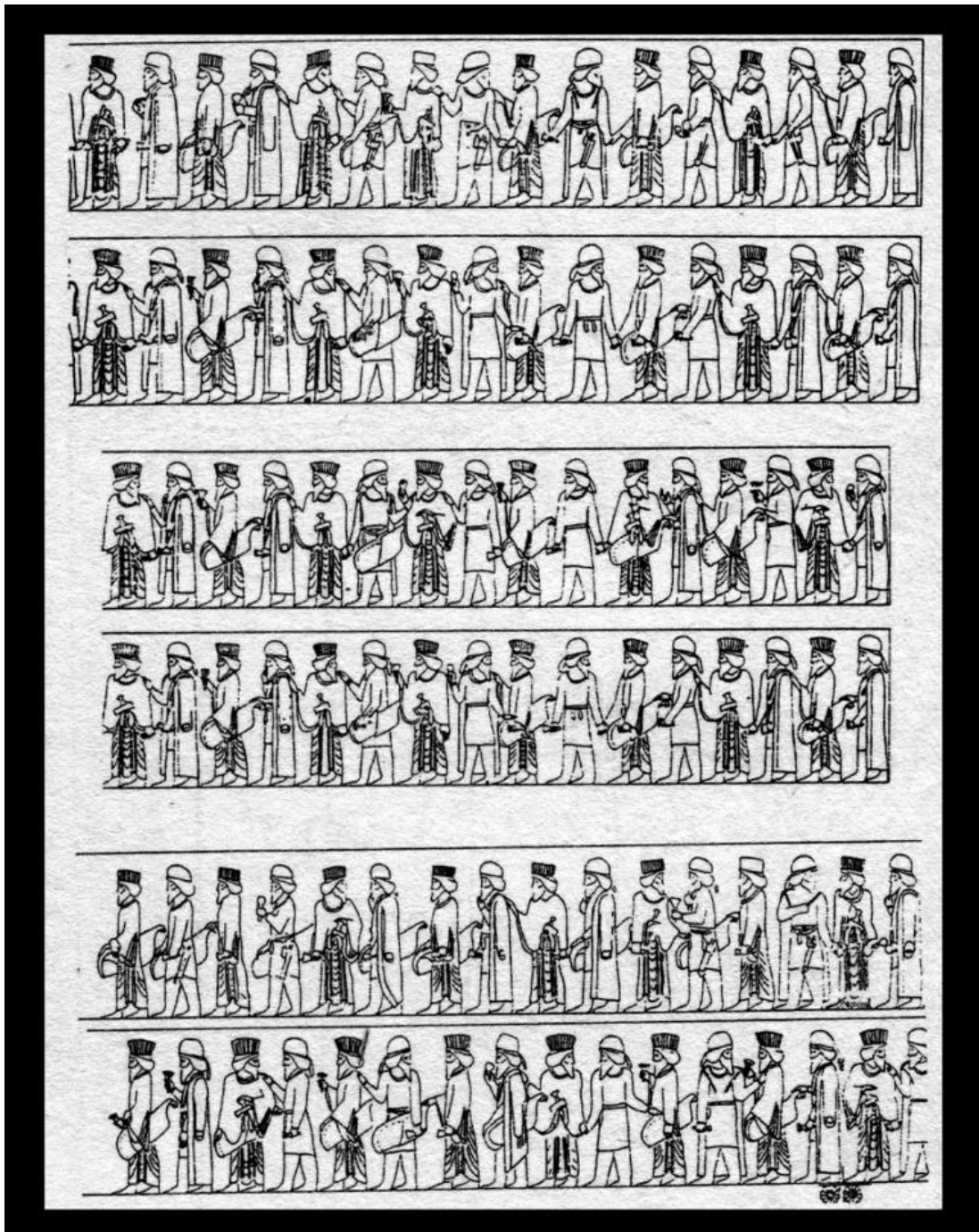


Figure 40: Figures of Various Ethnicities and Nations on the Eastern and Northern Fronts of Apadana Palace (Ali Asghar Shariat Zadeh, 2010, p 29)



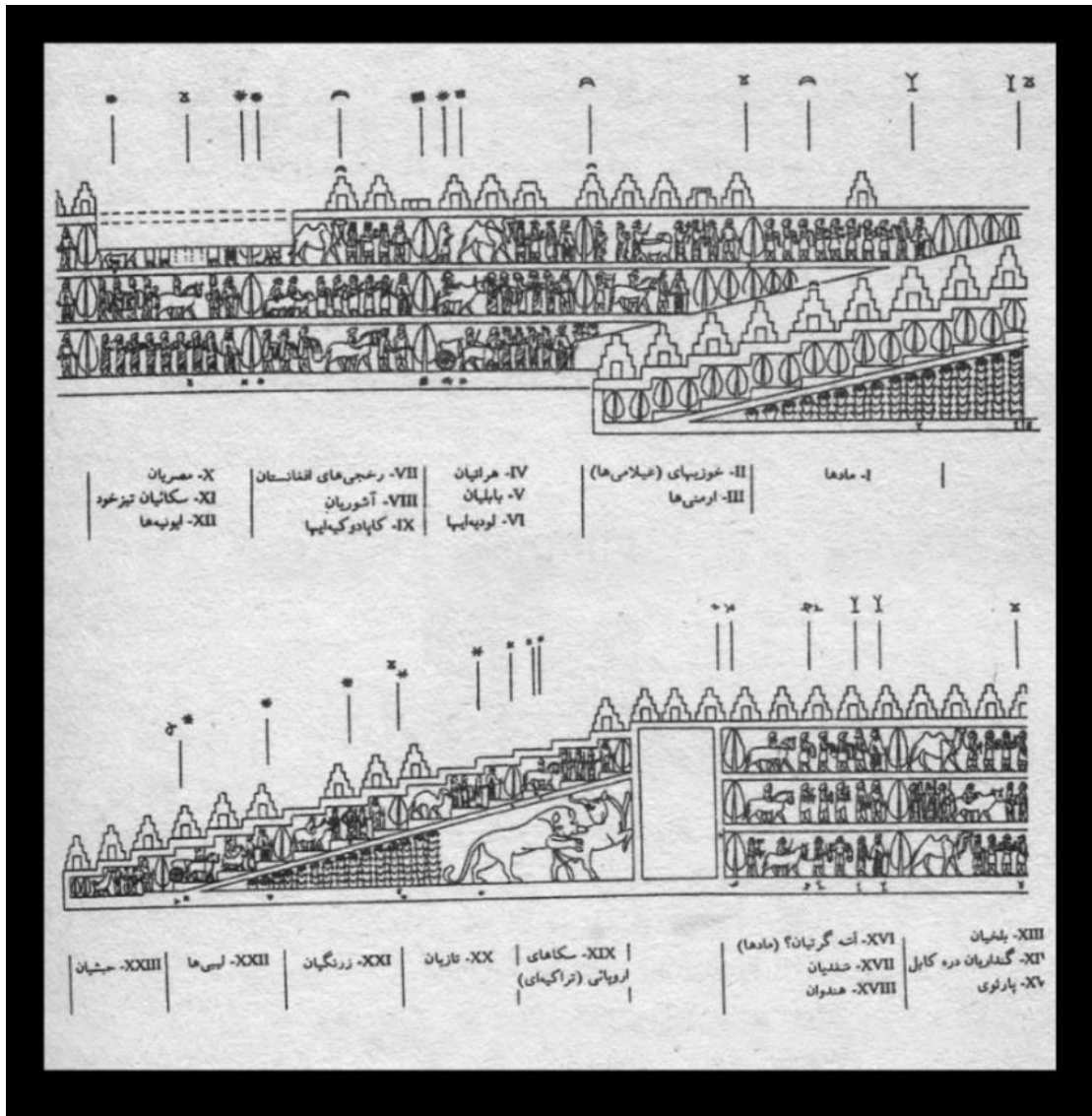


Figure 41: Plan of Apadana palace Plan of the Southern Front of the Eastern Staircase in Apadana Palace (Depicting Various Ethnicities and Nations) (Ali Asghar Shariat Zadeh, 2010: 28)

The battle between the hero (the man) and an animal is one of the most common reliefs in Mesopotamia from the Sumerian times onwards. This semi-mythical hero, who is known as Gilgamesh, has a significant presence in the literature and art of this period, especially in the engravings on seals (Moortgat, 1998, p140) (Fig 42).



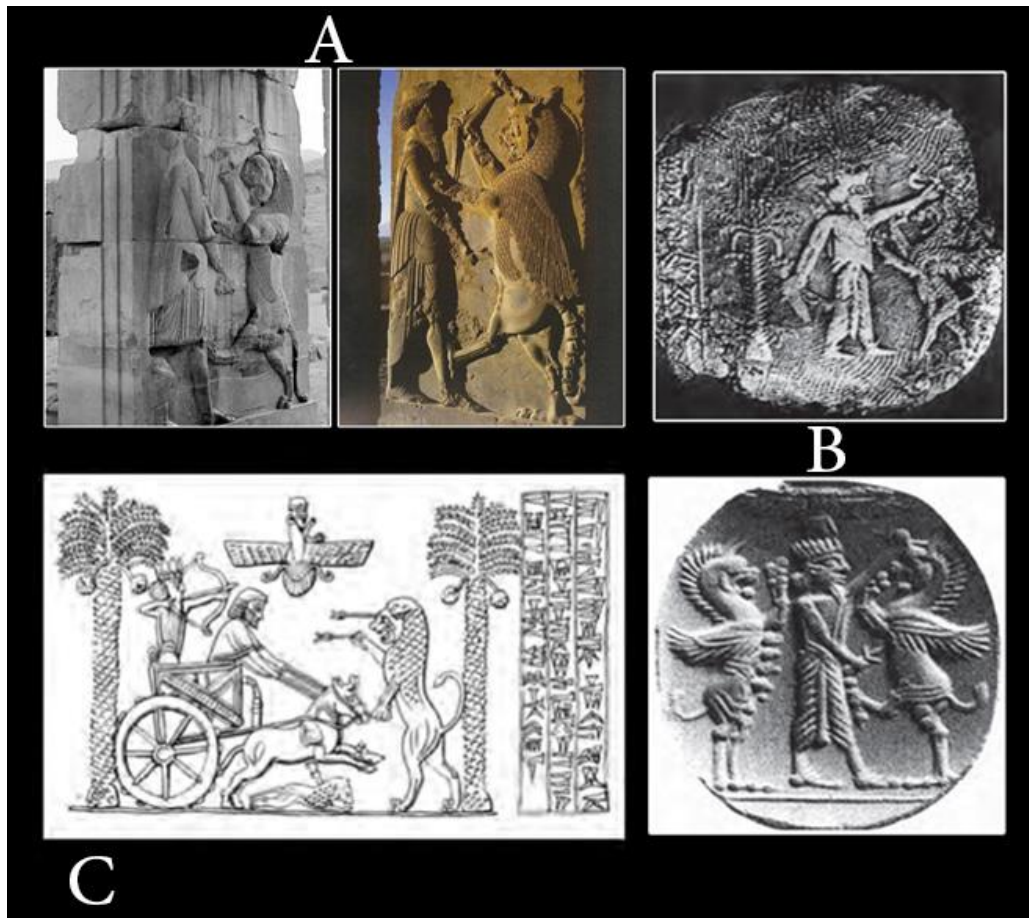


Figure 42: A. Relief of the King Fighting a Lion Gate of Persepolis (The Persians, Brosius, 2006, p 61), B. Engraving on a Seal: Battle of the Lion and the King (Allah Imani, 2009, p 75), C. : Seal of Darius in Egypt (The Persians, Brosius, 2006, p 44)

### 3.1.1. The Image of Women in Achaemenid Art

In the art of ancient Persia and historical civilizations, the role of women in society and the reflection of their image in arts can be observed in various forms. These artistic works refer to the educational, training, social, cultural, economic, and even military activities of women, indicating their elevated position in the society and the importance of this issue in such a way that there were even some matriarchal societies or communities. However, during the Achaemenid period, the presence of women reduced significantly, and we rarely see an image of a woman. For instance, in various engravings and reliefs in Persepolis, there is no image of a woman, and in the art of this period, this theme generally emerges in a very limited capacity, and

only on ornamental objects, such as seals, gems, ivory, and so on. This is while, as noted earlier in the section on the factors affecting the Kings- Women of the Court, women played a major role in the governmental structure of the Achaemenids, and they supervised some of the governing affairs as well. The fact that women are absent from the art of this period can have some other causes which require more discussion and investigation.

Some researchers believe that the reason behind this absence may be related to the perishable nature of the utilized materials and the lack of durability of the artistic works. In contrast, the reason might be that the images of women were depicted on highly valuable metals which were later reused (melted) for other purposes. In any case, it seems farfetched that the art of this period was completely devoid of any such images.

Moreover, in the few ornamental artistic works, mentioned above, some latent characteristics shed some light on the themes of the works and the representation of the role of women in the art of this period. For instance, all the available images have a small scale; the women are both from royal and non-royal classes of the society; in the scenes related to the women of the court, the images of the Public Audience are provoked (Fig 43).

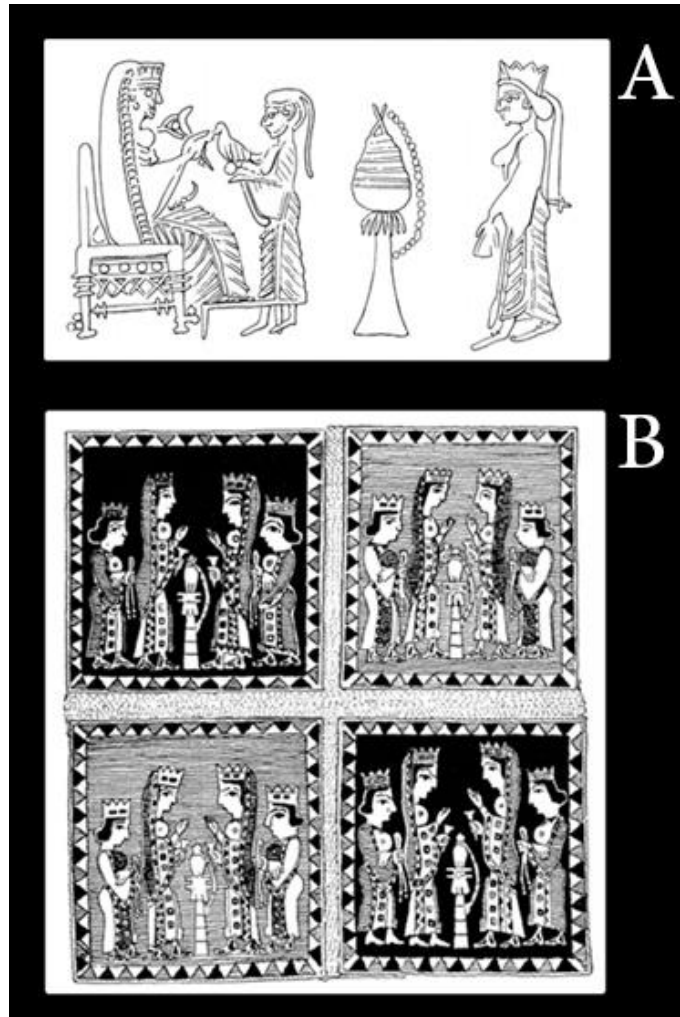


Figure 43: A. Public Audience with the Women of the Court on a Persian Seal (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 149), B. Scene Depicting Public Audience of a Woman from High Classes in a Neo-Elamite Style (*The Persians*, Brosius, 2006, 42)

## 3.2. Animals

### 3.2.1. The Lion

In the past, lions lived in Asia and the Middle East, and hunting lions was one of the great entertainment activities of the kings. The theme of the lion, in various positions, has long been present in the art of various civilizations. The Achaemenid

lion is derived from the myths of the Elamite, Babylonian, and Assyrian people. The roaring lion with protruded claws, ready to pounce, is one of the most favorite themes of this era. This is so important that to show muscles and brutality, the Achaemenids created a specific style to give animals permanent forms of anger and strength (Porada, 1978, p 231). The emergence of the image of the lion can be seen not only in Persepolis and architectural structures and carvings but also in glazed dishes and tiles (Fig 44).



*Figure 44: Linear Design of the Battle of Lion and Bull Persepolis, Front of the Eastern Staircase in Apadana Palace- the corner of the stairs depict the battle between a bull and a lion (The World of Achaemenid Persia, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 129)*

In general, lions are a symbol of strength and courage, and they have always been present in the majority of cultures and countries. This animal has been considered as the symbol for sun, light, justice, and a destructive force (Esmailpour, 2008, p 2-21). In addition to the court and the royal sphere, this animal has played a major role in the everyday life of ordinary people as well (e.g., stone lions in various cities and villages) (Fig 45).



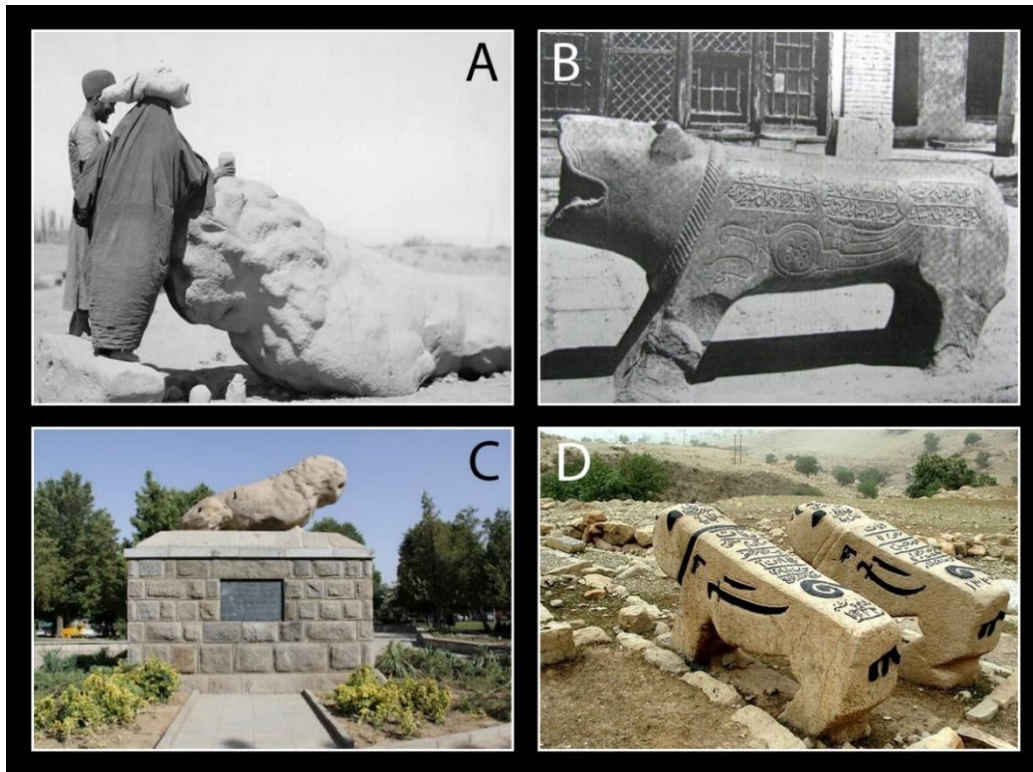


Figure 45: Stone Lion a and c: Stone Lion in Hamedan from the Time of Alexander the Great (built as a monument to one of the popular generals of Alexander, named Hephaestion, upon the order of Alexander the Great; at the time of the invasion of the Daylamites one of the stone lions was destroyed, while the legs of the other statue broke off, [www.nafae.ir](http://www.nafae.ir)); b: Stone Lion at Imamzadeh Ahmad in Isfahan, 17 Century AD (Tanavoli, 1977: 31); d: Stone Statue of a Lion (It is the tradition of the Bakhtiari Tribe to put such statues on the grave as a gravestone. In the book, 'Early Adventures in Persia, Susiana, and Babylonia', Henry Layard says, "The Bakhtiari people install lion statues and images on the graves of the Khans and famous figures to immortalize their braveness and militancy forever" (Henry Layard, 1988).)

### 3.2.2. The Eagle

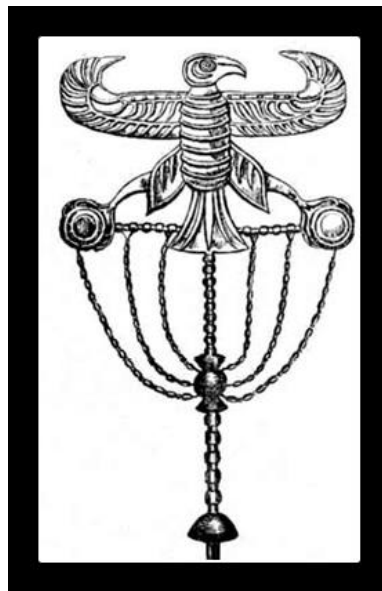
The Achaemenids considered the eagle as a symbol of strength and ability, and as a manifestation of glory and majesty. They considered seeing this large and strong bird as a good omen, and they created a golden flag with an eagle on it, which they erected on a long spear and used in front of the army in the campaigns of the Achaemenid kings. Similar to the lion considered the strongest land animal, the eagle was considered the strongest and most significant bird. Accordingly, the eagle was used in many images, and they would select symbols of the eagle for themselves. Artaxerxes II mentions the royal flag which was a golden eagle with spread wings (Sami, 1969, p 103). Moreover, another image of the eagle was found in 1948 in

Apadana Palace in Persepolis on a square azure tile from the Achaemenid period, whose edge was decorated using small depressed triangles .

### 3.2.3.The Falcon

Similar to other birds, the falcon with the ability to fly and soar into the sky, was the symbol for the soul, and based on ancient beliefs, the soul leaves the body in the form of a bird.

Falcon, as well as the eagle, as superior birds, were the symbols of the sun, the gods, victory, pride, and courage (Mitford, 2009, p 70), which can be seen in the art of many civilizations. In Persia, the falcon conspired at the same level as Simurgh<sup>111</sup>. The image of this bird on the flag of the Achaemenids was the symbol for victory (Rajabi, 2003, Vol 1, p437) (Fig 46), and it has been identified on some metal tableware as well.



*Figure 46: Ancient royal banner of Iran with a statue of a falcon designed and approved at the Commission for the Organization of the Royal Celebrations of Iran. This design was adapted by Ms. Leyla Taghipour from the original design on Page 98 of the book "Fravashi or the Falcon" written by Major Morad Orang.*

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111 Simurgh is the name of a mythical bird in Iranian mythology and literature. The Simurgh can be considered one of the most important creatures in the Persian literature. The Simurgh plays a major role in the stories of Shahnameh.

### 3.2.4.The Bull

The position of the bull on earth is equal to the position of Taurus in the heavens since the bull plays a major role in the cultivation of the land, and it is also the symbol for Mithra. In a spiritual hymn of ancient Persia, the bull is praised as the source of abundance and the agent of all that is good (Jobes, 1991, p 15-17). In ancient Persia, the horns of the bull were the symbol of wisdom, the sun, or the moon. In the bull chapter of Persepolis, we see a winged bull which is similar to the bulls seen in Assyrian art, with the body of a bull, the head of a man, and the wings of an eagle, acting as the guard of the royal gate. The chapters in the palace of Susa were also shaped like a bull (Fig 47).



*Figure 47: Chapter with two bulls back to back probably related to Apadana palace (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 52) (The image on the left is the two-headed bull chapter of Apadana Palace, [www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr))*

### 3.2.5.The Horse

One of the themes seen in the Achaemenid reliefs and other artworks of the Achaemenid period involves various animals including horses. The horse was highly important among the Persian people, and it was considered a mythical creature and a divine gift. Throughout history, horses played an important role in the art, culture,

and life of the Persians. In the Iranian myths, the belief was that the ancient gods rode chariots pulled by horses (Schwarz, 2006, 558). In the epigraphs of the Persepolis, Darius I calls his motherland the country of good people and good horses (Parham, 2009, p 8). The horses in the Medes and Achaemenid cavalries were large, beautiful, and agile, with a medium figure, small ears, and a head that was not similar to other horses (Sharifi, 2013, p 53) (Fig 48-49-50). In the Achaemenid reliefs and the glazed tiles of this period, the horses were depicted from a profile angle, depicting their muscles, with tied tails, and a protruded forelock.



*Figure 48: A Khwarizmi Cavalry Member, Eastern Staircase of Apadana Palace (Splendors of the Ancient Persia, Stierlin, 2006)*



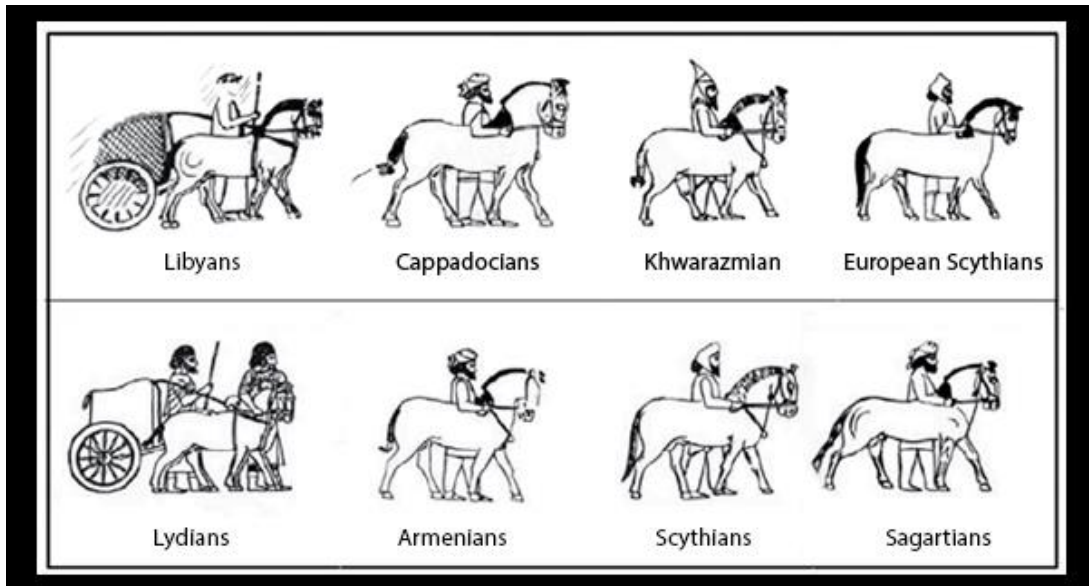


Figure 49: Images of Different Horses from the Achaemenid Period (Saeidi, 1997, p 100)



Figure 50: rhyton shaped like a head of a horse a. silver rhyton shaped like a head of a horse, Achaemenid, discovered in Mazandaran (Metropolitan Museum); b. Rhyton shaped like a man riding a horse, Achaemenid art, discovered in Arin Berd (Erebuni Museum, Armenia); and c. Rhyton with a horse design, discovered in Arin Berd (Erebuni Museum, Armenia) (Sharifi, 2013, 49-50)

### 3.2.6. The Ram or the Goat

In addition to other animals, since the ram played a major role in the life and livelihood of human beings, it was considered valuable and significant. The ranchers in the Iranian Plateau considered the ram to be superior to other livestock. For them, the ram was the symbol of the heavens and the male god. The image of the ram is present in the remains found on historical hills, and it is seen in the form of tableware from the Achaemenid period (Fig 51-52).



*Figure 51: Golden rhyton with the design of the head of a ram, 4-5 century BC (Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran)*



*Figure 52: Golden Rhyton Designed as a Wild Goat, Ancient Artifact from the Achaemenid Period Discovered in Ecbatana*

The ram is a manifestation of masculine power and creation. It was used in sacrificial rituals, and its blood would bring prosperity and fertility. The intertwined horns of this animal are considered sacred by the Jews (Mitford, 2009, p 65). Gradually, the

ram became a symbol of Faravahar<sup>112</sup>, and ancient religious texts recommend its meat and milk to the Persians (Schwarz, 2006, p 558).

### **3.3. Hybrids**

#### **3.3.1. The Griffin**

The griffin symbolizes awareness, resilience, courage, enlightenment, and wisdom. Griffin is a word with Greek origins that became common in Europe during the Middle Ages. This mythical animal with the body of the lion, the head and wings of an eagle, and the ears protruded forward (symbolizing alertness) was responsible for guarding treasures; hence, it was known as a symbol of protection and guardianship. In the chapters of Persepolis, the griffin is a symbol of power. The griffin is considered as a majestic and powerful animal who is the king of all other animals; it is considered the protector of huge wealth and valuable assets” (Friar, 1987, p 73). The image of this animal can be seen on a relief in the treasury of Persepolis in the Public Audience Hall of Darius on the sheath of the sword of one of the nobles (Fig 53). During the Achaemenid period, the king was considered to have super-human strength. For instance, he is seen in the center of a seal, battling griffins while putting his feet on the tails of two sphinxes depicted back to back. In another depiction, the king is standing on two winged bulls, holding two lions in his hands as a sign of victory.

The griffin is also seen in two other forms in the Achaemenid reliefs, i.e. the horned griffin and a horned griffin with a scorpion tail. The horned griffin with a scorpion tail is depicted on the three-way doors of Tachara Achaemenid Palace, and the four-way doors of Sad-stūn. In this image, the manifestations of undesirable and evil elements, including foul and frightening organs, are present. In relief on a glazed brick in Susa, the image of the horned griffin is depicted. The griffin is spreading its

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112 The symbol of Faravahar consists of a figure inside a winged disc.

wings, and its horn and tails are depicted in a spiral fashion (Fig 54). As noted earlier, the image of the griffin is present on Achaemenid seals as well, depicting the griffin in battle with the hero and the king.



Figure 53: The griffin on the sheath of the sword of one of the nobles in the Public Audience Hall of Darius (Porada, 1978, p 197)

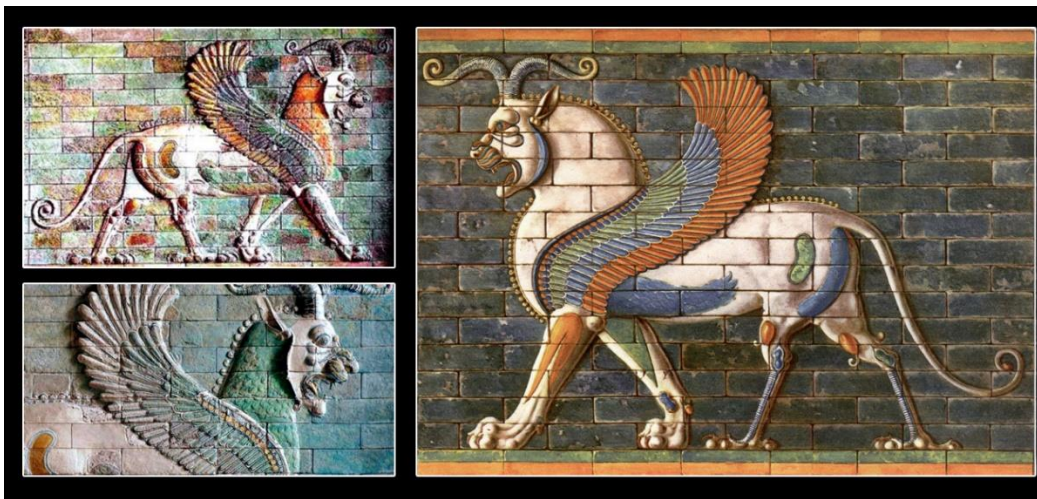


Figure 54: Griffin, relief on glazed brick Susa, Achaemenid Period, Louvre Museum (Dadvar and Mobini, 2009, p 326)

### 3.3.2. The Sphinx

The image of the sphinx was “first seen in the Middle East on Assyrian cylinder seals (13-11 century BC), and with a higher frequency in 9 century BC as the statues



protecting temples and palaces” (Hall, 2001, p 20). The sphinx<sup>113</sup> is a hybrid of man and animal, with a body of a lion, wings of an eagle, and the head of a man, it is triumphantly spreading its wings (symbol of power) to hold lions or monsters (Porada, 1948, p 48).

This image is seen from the Achaemenid period on relief in Persepolis Palace and engraved on a staircase in Apadana Palace, with the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the head of a man (Fig 55). Such a depiction in this place must have certainly been adapted from the artwork of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations. Moreover, we see sphinxes on the glazed bricks of Susa, depicted in mirrored positions (Fig 56). This image is also seen in various forms of Achaemenid seals.



*Figure 55: The Sphinx Relief on Rock, Persepolis Palace, 500 BC (Curtis, 1989, p 53)*

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113 The ancient Egyptians considered the sphinx the symbol of the sun.

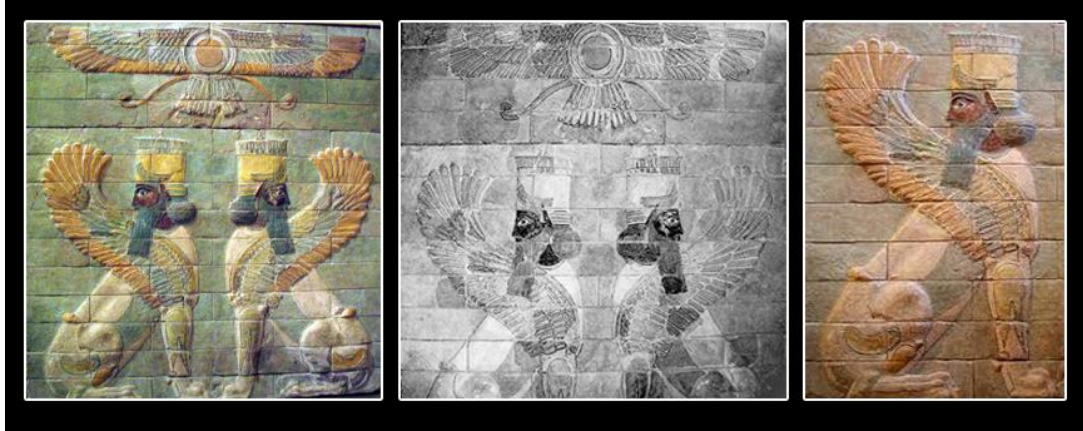


Figure 56: The image of two protective sphinxes and the Fravashi on bricks in Darius Palace, Susa (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 121)

### 3.3.3. The Bull-Man

An imaginary beast with the head and body of a man and the horns, the bust, and the legs of a bull became common from the second half of the third millennium BC all over Mesopotamia and Elam. The image of the bull-man is depicted on Elamite seals as an adaptation of the Epic of Gilgamesh and Enkidu<sup>114</sup>, the Sumerian hero fighting a lion or a buffalo (Black, 1992, p 51). The Achaemenid chapters with this structure (Fig 57) are a symbol of the mental and physical power of the king for the administration of the land (Dadvar and Mobini, 2009: 74). This hybrid creature sometimes accompanied the god of the sun, and it was previously considered as the symbol of the god and the protector of the winged disc in Assyrian art (Black and Green, 2006, p 85-86) (Fig 58).

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114 Half human- half bull



*Figure 57: Winged Bulls of the Gate of All Nations Part of a Huge Stone Chapter in the Form of a Head of a Man and the Body of a Bull, Persepolis (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 62)*



*Figure 58: Winged Bulls of the Gate of All Nations*

### **3.3.4.The Fish-Man**

As an ancient theme with deep symbolic meanings and concepts, the fish has been present for a long time in the art of various religions, ideologies, and cultures around the world, and it has been associated with life, death, and fertility.

The image of a human whose lower body is the body of a fish and has a fishtail has been used in ancient artworks, especially in Mesopotamia. This image is also seen in Assyrian art, where it was called Apkallu (fish-man). This creature was in contact with the gods of the sea (Black and Green, 2006, p 216-218). An example of this hybrid image is engraved on both sides of the eastern gate of the Public Audience Hall of Pasargadae.

On the other hand, at the time of Nowruz in the Persian culture, the sign of the month of Esfand (the 12<sup>th</sup> month) is Pisces, which turns into Aries, indicating the end of the year. The fish is the symbol of Anahita (Anāhitā), and it is associated with Nowruz, which is the time for birth and fertility (Farahvashi, 1976, p 64).

### **3.3.5.The Bird-Man**

Another unique hybrid creature is the bird-man, depicted on one of the Achaemenid seals. This seal depicts the king on the left-hand side while he is praying. On the right-hand side of the seal, the Fravashi is seen, above a weird depiction. Similar to the king, the bird-man has raised his hands in prayer in front of the Fravashi. Another unique and rare Achaemenid seal depicts the bird named Varghan which has been mentioned in the Avesta (later renamed to Simurgh), while someone is riding it, and it holds a crown of flowers while flying.

### **3.3.6.The Fravashi**

In the reliefs of Persepolis and on other Achaemenid buildings, there is an engraved depiction of a bird with spread wings and a human body and face. The appearance and clothes on this image are highly similar to those of the Achaemenid kings. In the



Achaemenid religion, Ahura Mazda (the god of knowledge and wisdom) rules the heavens and covers the earth and the king with his wings to protect them. He is the greatest of gods, and he is superior to all other gods and creatures. In the oldest appellations based on Zoroastrian texts, this image has been called ‘Fravashi’ or ‘Faravahar’ (Chavoush Akbari, 2002, p 61). This image has also been named the Ahura Mazda.

Some scholars believe that Fravashi is the symbol of the establishment of Ahura Mazda, Mithra, and Anahita. Accordingly, the person who has a hat on his head and wears Persian clothes possesses an Ahura-related aspect. The two horns in the image are the symbol of Anahita, and the disc is the wheel of law (Rta) or the wheel of justice. This disc can also be related to Mithra. According to these scholars, the Fravashi was a non-Zoroastrian symbol, and its spread among the Zoroastrians was based on an error (Zoka, 1972, p 21) (Fig 59- 60).



*Figure 59: The image of Fravashi with a winged Disc Persepolis (The Persians, Brosius, 2006, p 67)*



Figure 60: the image of Ahura Mazda with wings right: Behistun (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 124); left Persepolis ([www.ancient.eu/Faravahar](http://www.ancient.eu/Faravahar))

### 3.4. Plants

Considering plants and trees sacred, and even worshipping them, along with other natural elements, was one of the characteristics of ancient human beings. These people considered plants to have souls, and they believed that the souls of the dead live on in these plants. Based on their beliefs, the trees had the power to create rain, brighten the sun, increase the size of livestock, and help women in terms of fertility (Bahar, 2005, p 43-44). Accordingly, plants and trees manifested in different forms in the Achaemenid art.

#### 3.4.1. The Tree of Life

In the beliefs of the ancients, in addition to providing fruits and shade, trees had more transcendental meanings and concepts. The tree was the pillar and center of the world, and the symbol of immortality with its roots in the underground world and its leaves moving towards the heavens, reflecting a sense of absolute perfection (Mitford, 2009, 48-49). Therefore, the tree finds a sacred aspect.

In the majority of cases, the trees are surrounded by animals or supernatural beings, which increases their semantic load. However, what further makes this role more significant is the force of life and existence visualized in the form of the Tree of Life.

In Persepolis, the Tree of Life is the symbol of the legitimacy of the reign of this dynasty and the blessing of Ahura Mazda. In Bahman Yasht (the most important prophesying work of Zoroastrian literature), the tree is the symbol of kingdom and succession (Adi, 2002, p 27-28). Since many ancient themes had a symbolic meaning, this image is no exception, and it is the symbol of wisdom. The roots of the Tree of Life are in the ground, while its branches are in the heavens. Therefore, the symbolic aspect is again manifested, which is the transcendence from the lower kingdom (the earth) towards the gods and the heavens (Bagheri, 2010, p 100) (Fig 61).



*Figure 61* Image of the Tree of Life between Two Winged Goats

### **3.4.2. The Cypress Tree**

The cypress tree is one of the evergreen trees, and it has a unique calmness and elegance due to its height and beautiful configuration. Therefore, it is often observed in Persian art. However, there is not much evidence of its presence before the

Achaemenids. This theme has been carved on the staircase of Apadana Palace among the individuals who are bringing gifts. In contrast to other trees in Persepolis, the cypress is more frequently used.

Since the cypress tree is the symbol of immortality, it was believed that it protects the dead and their corpses. Therefore, it was usually planted in cemeteries. It is also considered the symbol of death in China (Mitford, 2009, p 49). In ancient Persia, when a child was born, his/her father would plant this tree. (Fig 62).



*Figure 62: The Cypress Tree*

### **3.4.3. The Lotus**

One of the plant motifs frequently used in the Achaemenid period is the lotus. This motif has also been observed in the artworks of civilizations before the Achaemenids in Iran (e.g., bronze artifacts in Lorestan, clay artifacts in Sialk, and so on) and in other cultures (e.g., Egypt, India, and so on). Lotus is a historical sign, and it was the symbol of spiritual creation and immortality for ancient Aryans since this flower is the only being that is created in peaceful and silent lagoons and swamps. Moreover, this flower is the symbol of the sun. Since the Achaemenids respected Mithra very much, they often used the stem, flower, and leaves of the lotus in decorating the



buildings of Persepolis (Shamim, 2014, p 23). The lotus is the symbol of eternity. The twelve petals of the lotus represent the twelve months of the year. In the Persian beliefs, Ahura Mazda, Mithra, and Anahita are related to the cypress, the palm tree, and the lotus, respectively (Bagheri, 2010, p 115-116). The lotus is the sign for the four elements, i.e. the nature and its revolutions. Its seed grows in the sunlight, it falls into the lagoon, and its sprout flourishes in the light, referring to the reincarnation cycle in eastern beliefs (Laforgue and Allendy, 2008, p 24).

As noted earlier, architecture and art played a major role in ancient Persia. One of the most famous applications of the lotus in the art and architecture of ancient Persia involves the lotus designs based on the huge pillars of Persepolis. This flower is present in different forms in Persepolis, whether in the hands of Xerxes I who is depicted in a profile angle to its ornamental application on the margins of the figures depicted on the staircases, which depict the flower with a downward view.

In the Persian myths, this flower (Fig 63) is the symbol of the god, Nahid, who occupies an important position in the rituals of ancient Persia. She is the god of water, and she is depicted as a young woman in the reliefs. The name of this god was first seen as “Anahita” in the Achaemenid inscriptions. Therefore, the lotus has been considered the flower of Anahita. In addition, the lotus is closely related to the Mithraic religion. In the scene of the birth of Mithra, he is born out of a lotus bud. Therefore, despite some theories which consider the root of the lotus in Buddhism, it must be noted that this motif is related to Mithraism, which is much more ancient.

Depicting this flower on the bases of the pillars is an emphasis on its power in protecting the Achaemenid palaces and kingdom. For instance, the lotus as a symbol of power was first seen in the hands of Ashurbanipal (668-621 BC). Afterward, it is

seen as the same symbol in the hands of Darius I in Persepolis. The lotus in the hands of an individual indicates that that person belongs to the royal family.



*Figure 63: The Lotus*

### **3.5. Natural and Geometrical Shapes**

#### **3.5.1. The Moon (Crescent and Full Moon)**

From the ancient Babylonian time onward, especially since the time of the Kassites<sup>115</sup>, the combination of the crescent moon and the disc of the sun has been present in the form of an eclipse (Black and Green, 1992, p 54). According to the available inscriptions, the crescent moon was considered the symbol of the moon god, i.e., Sin (Nanna-Suen), at least from the time of ancient Babylon. Moreover, it is said that the origin of this symbol goes back to Egypt, and in the Zoroastrian religion, the Zoroastrians sometimes pray in front of the moonlight (Boyce, 2007, p 85). The motif of the crescent moon is very common during the Achaemenid period on the top section of the seals which bear the depiction of the hero (Root, 1999, p

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<sup>115</sup> The Kassites (who were called the Kassi by the Assyrians) were mountain-dwelling ancient tribes living in the lands to the southwest of the Caspian Sea and the foothills of Zagros Mountains circa third millennium BC. Before the Medes period, the Assyrians called Ecbatana or Hamdean, Kar-Kasi, meaning the City of the Kassites.

174). Moreover, on the façade of the Achaemenid tombs in Naqsh-e Rostam, such a crescent is always present in the middle of a flat disc, located above to the right of the fire pot and behind the disc of the winged man.

### **3.5.2. The Sun Disc**

Since the ancient past, sun worship was highly common among various nations. In the history of ancient Persia, the sun has always had a unique position since it was the symbol for the authority of the king in such a way that the image of the sun would always be depicted above the tents and even on the banners of the kings (Hinnells, 2004, p 148).

### **3.5.3. The Winged Disc**

This motif, with a symbolic meaning, consists of a disc and spread wings on both sides similar to the wings of a falcon. Below the disc, there is a second falcon. Inside the disc, a man with a long beard, a Persian robe, and a crown can be seen. The appearance of this man completely matches the image of the Achaemenid kings. The roots of this motif can also be found in the artwork of other civilizations, such as the Egyptian and the Assyrian civilizations.

For more than half a century, the exact nature and function of the Winged Disc in western Asia have been the source of debates and controversies among researchers (Dalley, 1986, p 85). Some scholars believe it to be the symbol of the separation between the earth and the heavens (Gaiman, 1996, p 212). During the reign of the Achaemenids, this motif remained an important symbol for a long time in Persia (Black and Green, 1992, p 185). This motif probably was transferred from Assyrians to the Medes and then to the Achaemenids. However, the Achaemenid winged discs vary in terms of the shape of the wings, the arrangement of the feathers, depicting or not depicting a human figure, and the position of the human figure inside the disc

(Raf, 1994, p 181). However, it should be noted that the majority of scholars believe that the Winged Disc is the symbol of Ahura Mazda or the divine blessing.

#### **3.5.4. The Barsam**

Barsam was an object with a religious function formed by combining parts of plants, such as branches, sticks, and greenery. The clergy would carry it in their hands or put it in front of their faces while praying. Since some figures of men carrying such bundles are observed on Assyrian and Urartu objects from the eighth and seventh century BC, it is believed that the magi in the western parts of Persia adopted the Barsam from their neighbors (Boyce, 1996, p 56).

#### **3.5.5. The Wheel**

In many traditions, the wheel is a symbol of the sun, and many beliefs, rituals, and traditions related to the wheel are associated with the mythical structure of the sun. The motif of the wheel, a well-known example of which is seen on the famous royal seal of Darius, usually consists of a central circle with several blades (eight blades). However, some individual instances (without a chariot), such as the Pasargadae seal, usually lack this central circle.

#### **3.5.6. The Star**

The motif of the eight-pointed star has been present in Mesopotamian art from pre-historic times until the Neo-Babylonian era. Moreover, during the Achaemenid period, this motif was depicted on clay tablets.

### **4. The Achaemenid Art**

In the Avesta, people are divided into four groups based on their knowledge and wisdom. The fourth group is those who are similar to craftsmen and artists. This group is called ‘hutoxšān’ or Khoob Kushandegan (those who try their best), which included those who master a craft or art and those who build objects, and businesspeople who supply the needs of the people (Shahrokh, 1958, p 98). In



general, the Aryan tribes were very interested in ornamental arts from the very beginning, and in the later generations, this artistic taste grew and increased until it penetrated the Achaemenid Empire and became transformed.

With the formation of the Achaemenid royalty, they became the heirs to the achievements of various advanced civilizations and nations that came before them including Elamites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Lydians, each of which reached a high level of development in terms of art and architecture at their own time. For instance, the effects of Egyptian art are evident on Achaemenid art, which was directly adapted from the Egyptians or the Phoenicians. One of the oldest impacts of Egyptian art in the Achaemenid period before the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses can probably be seen in Pasargadae, on the relief of the winged man. This work is an imitation of the images of the Egyptian god, especially Harpocrate which was originally one of the Egyptian gods that later became the object of worship by the Greeks and Romans as well (Sami, 1996, 99) (Fig 64). The signs and traces of these influences can also be observed from the artwork of other civilizations including Elamites and Assyrians, as well.

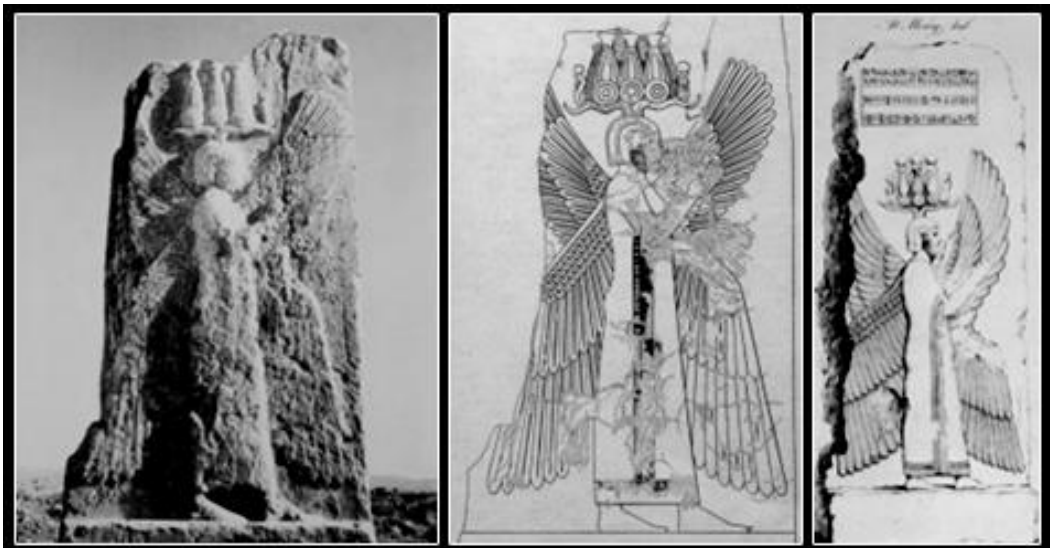


Figure 64: The relief of the Winged Guardian in Pasargadae(Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014, p 149)

However, while using the culture, science, and artistic achievements of these nations and civilizations, the Achaemenids took the initiative and integrated these into Persian art to create a unique and specific style as a combinatory or derivative style and not an imitative one. Moreover, their symbolic meanings overshadowed their simulative nature.

The empires which were considered so huge and sophisticated in terms of ethnicity and culture were generating a type of art that can be considered universal and global in terms of scope and scale. This was since some populations entering this empire carried with them highly filtered and sophisticated artistic concepts, compelling the Achaemenids to praise and widely integrate them (Vanzan, 2012, p 66).

As noted earlier, the Achaemenids were never attempting to unify their conquered lands and realms in terms of culture. In other words, they were not trying to unify and streamline languages, religions, and temples. They exerted their power in various forms, one of which is the representation factor which was used to express the power and the issue of legitimacy. These representations and drawings manifested in various artistic forms and they will be discussed in the following section.

In this section, Achaemenid art is divided into two main groups, i.e., architecture and industrial arts, and each group will be discussed in detail.

#### **4.1. Architecture**

To complete their great architectural plans, which were a symbol of their power and rule, the Achaemenid kings would often recruit skilled craftsmen, artists, and architects from all around their vast realm (Sami, 1951, p 193). They wanted to present the artistic nature of the identity of the Achaemenids in the best way possible while leaving behind prominent artwork. The main components in the architecture

of this period can be considered as building constructions and materials, sculptures, and lithography. The survived instances effectively include the palace architecture, which signifies the deep understanding of Achaemenid rules of their power and their desire to show this power to all their subordinates (Vanzan, 2012, p 66).

The common architectural style involved pillared halls with flat wooden ceilings, as can be seen in the palaces in Persepolis (Fig65). The pillar element is important for its role and effects on the strength of the building. In the composition of the Achaemenid pillars, the styles of constructing the pillars and chapiters from the Median buildings, the ancient Egyptian temples, and the Persian pillars were combined in an indistinguishable way. The presence of these pillars and bases, as well as their forms in various areas, including bell-shaped pillar bases (e.g., in Gomti, Karaçamirli in Azerbaijan, and Bejnamin in Armenia) and the chapiters discovered in Zikhia-Gora in Georgia indicate the presence of Achaemenids in these regions. The main identifying element in Achaemenid palaces or pillared Achaemenid halls involves the pillars which can effectively be considered as the artistic identity of the Achaemenids (Fig 66).



Figure 65: Model of Persepolis a- 3D Model of Persepolis; b- Reconstruction of the Northwest Corner of Apadana Palace by Charles Chipiez



*Figure 66: Columns in Pasargad and Persepolis Limited Use of the Anathyrosis Technique for the Construction of Pillars in Pasargadae (Left) and Persepolis (Right) (Motamedmanesh, 2018, p13)*

The oldest use of pillars in Persian architecture has been discovered in Tepe Hasanlu from the Median period (9<sup>th</sup> century BC), and the peak of the art of pillar construction goes back to the Achaemenid Empire. In Tepe Hasanlu, all the pillars were made of wood, while the pillar bases were made of stone (Mirfatah, 1969, p11). These pillars were first utilized by the Mannaeans, and they were later used in the Median architecture in Gewdîn<sup>116</sup> and Noushijan<sup>117</sup>.

From a mythical perspective and in ancient beliefs, pillars were the support for the heavens, and they were considered the bond and the link between the heavens and the earth. This architectural element was considered as the mental image of God which is always stable and permanent, in contrast to the instability and fragile nature of human beings (Halle, 2001, p 148; Nouraghaei, 2008, p 32). The roots of some of the elements of these pillars are from other civilizations, while some of these

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116 Gewdîn Village is located in the Central District of Kangavar Country in Kermanshah Province of Iran (Mirdavoudi, 1995, p 48).

117 A three-layer ancient hill, where the first layer is attributed to the Medes, the second layer is attributed to the Achaemenids, and the third layer is attributed to the Sassanid Empire (Mirdavoudi, 1995, p 52).

elements are completely Persian. For instance, the pillar bases are shaped like a reversed lotus, adapted from Egypt, while the stone chapiters installed at the top of the pillars had a completely Persian design (Brosius, 2006, p 74).

In the Achaemenid art, pillars consist of three main sections: the first section is the pillar base. Dadvar classifies Achaemenid pillar bases as follows: (I) vase-shaped pillar bases with designs including the lotus flower and bud, gable design, and tongue design; (II) cube-shaped pillar bases with designs including single-step cube-shaped pillar base (as observed in the Treasury Palace in Persepolis), two-section two-step black and white cube-shaped pillar base, three-section two-step black and white cube-shaped pillar base, and the two-step cube-shaped pillar base with a black groove-free base (Dadvar and Mombeini, 2011, p 86-87) (Fig 67-68). One of the techniques commonly used for constructing pillar bases was the color contrast, created by using black limestone and white limestone. This color contrast can also be seen in the Urartu architectural art, so presumably, these contrasting colors were rooted in the traditions of Asia (Near East) (Porada, 2004, p 208) (Fig 69).



*Figure 67: Plant and geometric-shaped Pillar Base a: Reversed Lotus Design, Susa (wikipedia.org), b: Gable Design of the Pillars in Gate of All Nations (Ghirshman, 1967: 214), c: Wide-Tip Tongue Design, Sad-Sotun Palace (Dadvar and Mombeini, 2011, p 203)*



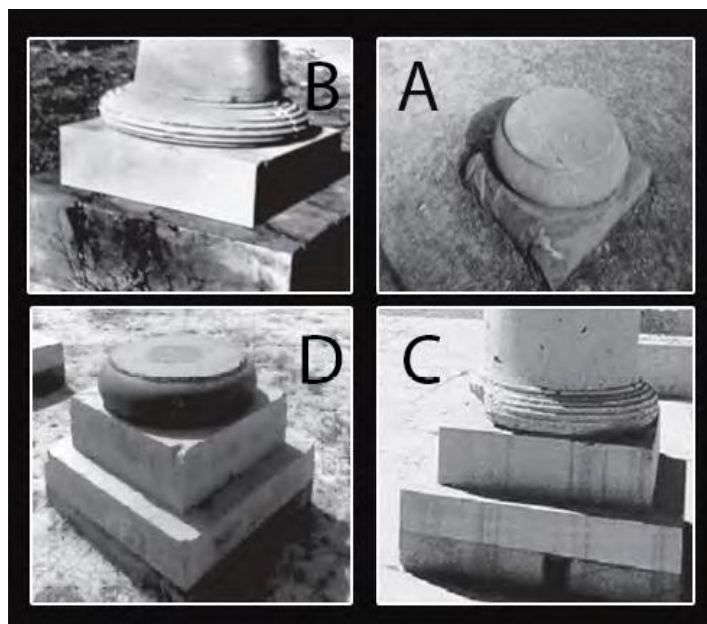


Figure 68: Cube-Shaped Pillar Base a: Single-Step Cube-Shaped Pillar Base, Treasury Palace, Persepolis (Rajabi, 1999: 42); b: Two-Section Cube-Shaped Pillar Base, Cyrus Palace (Stronach, 2000: 510); c: Three-Section Cube-Shaped Pillar Base, Exclusive in Cyrus Palace, Pasargadae; d: Cube-Shaped Pillar Base with Black Column Body

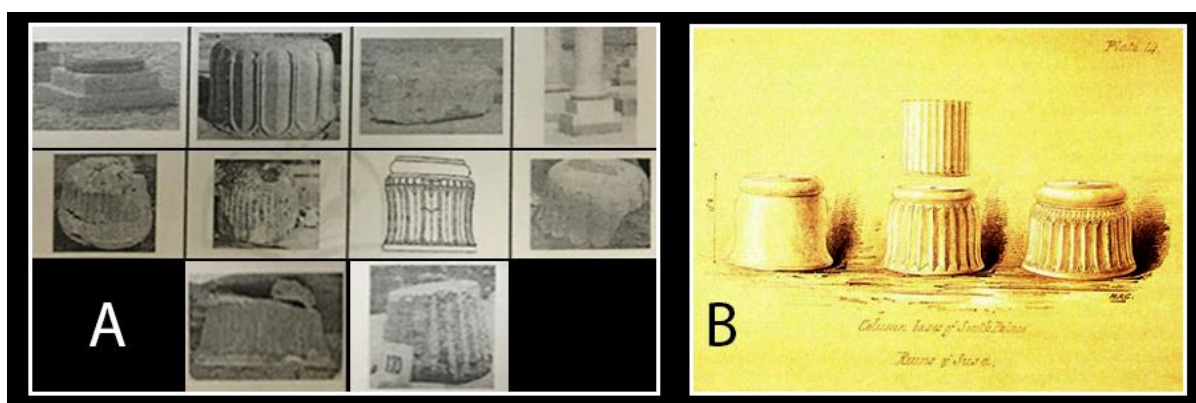


Figure 69: Pillar Bases Discovered from the Achaemenid Period a: Pillar Bases Discovered from the Achaemenid Period (top-first line, from right: Pasargadae, Susa, Persepolis, Borazjan; second line from right: Lidoma, Babylonia, Benjamin, Kakheti; third line from right: Lidoma, Babylonia, Benjamin, Kakheti; third line from right: Tomb Bot, Karaçamirli); b: Example of Stone Pillar Bases Excavated from Susa (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 51)

The second section of these huge pillars is the body constructed using wood, plain stones, or grooved stones. At the top of the pillars, the chapters<sup>118</sup> are installed as

118 The wooden timbers of the ceiling would be placed on the back of these chapters.

the third section of the pillars and the most important visual element in the form of two statutes with different shapes sitting back to back including bull-man, bull, griffin, and half lion. An example of these chapters has been discovered in excavations of the Council Palace in front of the soldiers' neighborhood (Mahmoudi, 1998, p79) (Fig 70).

Bull-shaped chapters were used on the pillars of the Gate of All Nations, the vestibule hall of the Great Gate of the Central Hall, the northern and western verandas of Apadana Palace, and the pillars in the throne halls in Apadana Palace (Firouzmandi et al., 2008, p 35) (Fig71). Using the image of mythical bulls was common in Mesopotamia, especially in Elamite and Assyrian architectures, as the guardian of the buildings. Therefore, the Achaemenid architecture's use of these animals was possibly inspired by the Elamite and Assyrian architecture. However, Herzfeld believes that the image of the bull and the nature of hybrid animals on the chapters in Persepolis might have been inspired by Urartians (Herzfeld, 2002, p 248). The Achaemenids considered the griffin as a guardian against Ahriman (the Devil), magic, and lies. The presence of this creature in the chapters of Persepolis is a symbol of power. Griffin is a creature with special power, considered highly elevated and the king of all animals, which is also famous as a guardian for valuable assets and wealth (Friar, 1987, p 73). The image of the griffin can also be seen in the Assyrian reliefs (Fig72). In addition, lions were the symbolic guardians of temples, palaces, and tombs, and it was believed that their predatory nature would protect against adverse effects (Jobes, 1991, 62-75). Chapters shaped like lions can be found in Apadana Hall in Persepolis, placed in an eastward direction (Fig 73).



Figure 70: Bull-Man Chapter a: Reconstructed Design of Pillars of Persepolis (*Forgotten Empire*, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 51) b: Chapter with a Bull-Man Design (*Dadvar and Mombeini*, 2009, p 214)

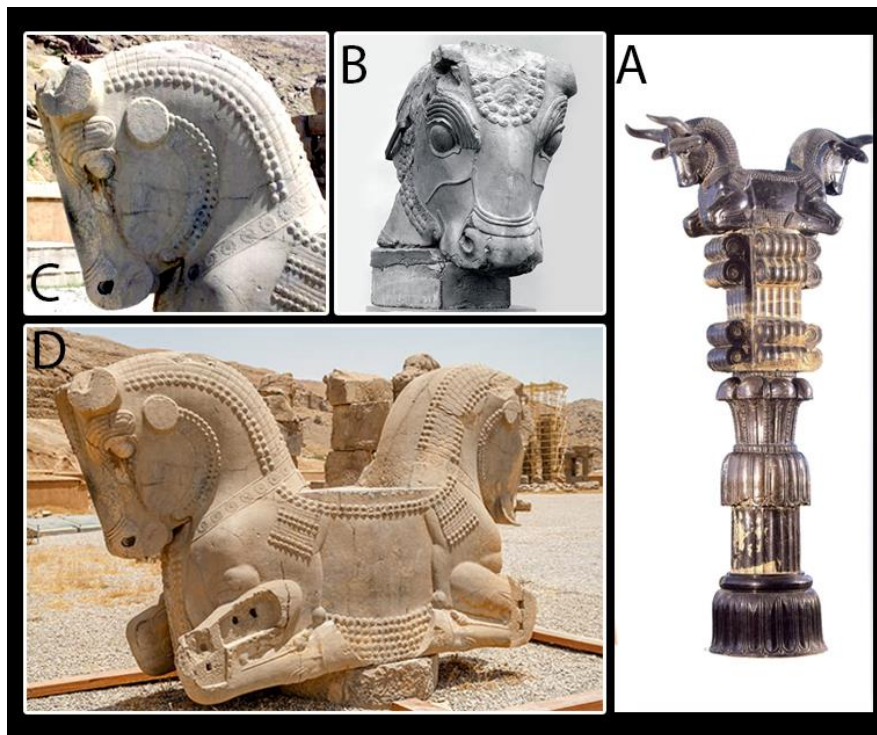


Figure 71: Bull Chapter A: Reconstructed Pillar, Persepolis, Louvre Museum (*Forgotten Empire*, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 64); B: Bull Chapter (Limestone), Discovered in Persepolis, Kept at Metropolitan Museum, New York; C, D: Bull Chapter (Limestone), Discovered in Persepolis, Kept in Persepolis





Figure 72: Griffins Chapter Huge Size of the Stone Chapter with Eagle Design (Persepolis, Mousavi, 2012: 198), Chapter Designed as Two Back-to-Back Griffins, Unfinished Gate of Persepolis (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 52)

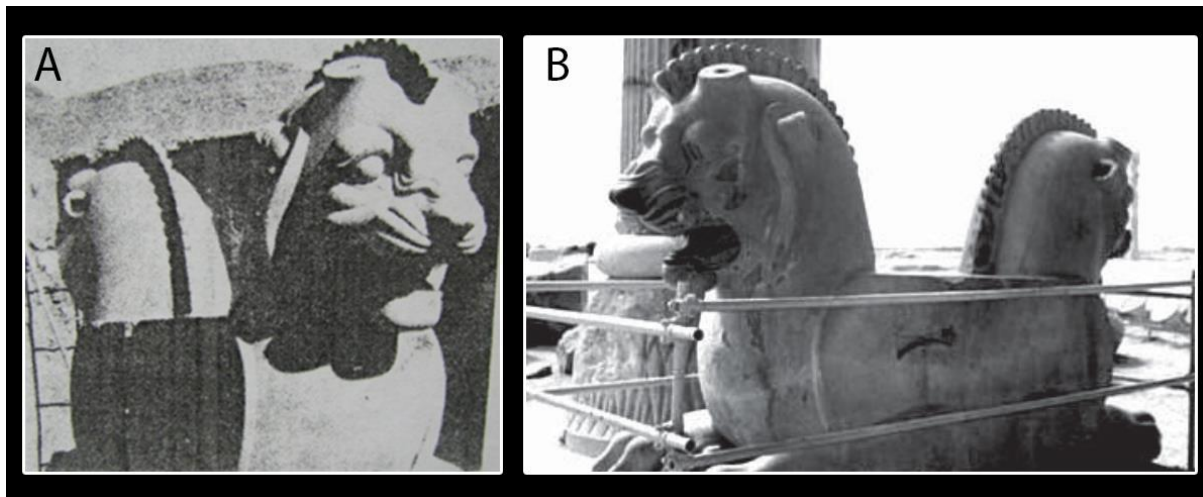


Figure 73: Lion Chapter a: Chapter with the Design of Two Lion Heads, Persepolis (Sami, 2010, p 117); b: Chapter with the Design of Two Lion Heads, Persepolis (Dadvar and Mombeini, 2011, p 89)

To better understand the architecture of the Achaemenid period, it is useful to pay attention to the buildings, the figures attached to the buildings, and the images carved on their structures, which in general leads to a union from a fraction to the whole or from the whole to a fraction. These elements are so intertwined that it is sometimes impossible to offer a specific classification for them. However, by classifying them into the following categories, we can hope to obtain a better understanding of these concepts:

- Buildings (palaces, tombs, temples);
- Sculpting
- Carving and engraving (epigraphy, reliefs).

#### **4.1.1. Buildings**

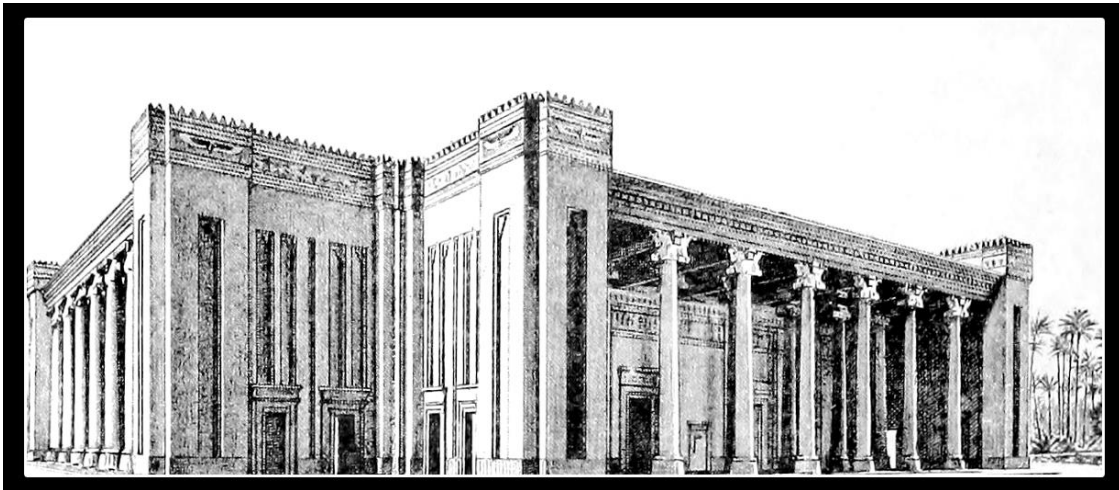
##### **4.1.1.1. Palaces**

The palace refers to a place where the royal family, the head of the government, the officials, and the nobles live. Sometimes, large buildings, structures, and other constructs may also be called palaces. The Pharaoh Palace in Thebes, the palaces in Persepolis, and the Assyrian palaces in Nineveh are among the oldest palaces of the world. There are explicit differences between palaces and castles and fortifications; fortifications have military applications, while castles have military and defensive applications. When designing the architecture of the palaces, attempts were made to create diverse spaces, especially interior spaces; while the façade of the building would be symmetrical and pairwise, the architecture of the interior spaces was usually asymmetric.

##### **4.1.1.1.1. Susa Palace**

Dandamaev states that the commencement of construction activities in Susa was before the start of the campaigns of Darius the Great in Persepolis (Dandamaev and Luckonin, 1989, p 257; Vallat, 1986, p 281). On the other hand, the Egyptian Udjahorresnet inscriptions mention the fact that in 519 BC, Darius was in his palace in Susa (as cited in Briant, 1993, p 724). This architectural evidence and written documents indicate that construction activities most likely started in Susa during the rule of Darius I and after the reign of Cyrus II and Cambyses II (Boucharlat, 2009, p 218; Muscarella, 1992, p 216). Before the ascension of Darius I to the throne, Susa maintained its Elamite texture, and it was at the beginning of the reign of Darius that it became one of the main royal centers.

The Apadana Palace in Susa was the winter palace of the Achaemenid kings and the main palace of Darius I. This palace was constructed by the order of Darius the Great circa 521-515 BC in Susa on the remains of the Elamite Empire. The king would spend most of his time in Susa, and it was only during the summer that he would leave Susa due to the very hot summer weather of the city (Cook, 2009, p 140). Until the time of its destruction during the reign of Darius II, the Susa palace was the main headquarters, and it was the resident of the king in the middle of the fifth century BC (Fig 74).



*Figure 74: Reconstructed Image of Apadana Palace in Susa Created in 190*

The first excavations in the ruins of Susa were performed in 1849, leading to the discovery of valuable artifacts from various historical periods. During those years, there were several investigations in Susa until archeologists managed to discover the Susa Historical Site in 1880. After the discovery of the palace by the French, they took the pillars and chapters to France. Nowadays, there is not much left in this palace, except for several pillar bases, and the majority of artifacts discovered here were taken to Louvre Museum in Paris. Seventy years after this discovery, this palace was registered in the list of the National Monuments of Iran on October 2, 2001 (No. 3981).

The total area of Apadana Palace is 10,434 square meters. The walls of the palace were made out of bricks and the pillars were made of stone. This palace which has been called Bargah (Seat) or Apadaneh, was rebuilt by Artaxerxes II of Persia. The plan of the palace is similar to a mansion with three-pillared verandas in its northern, eastern, and western fronts. The central hall with dimensions of **58 × 58 m** includes a veranda with two rows of 6 pillars or columns, i.e., a total of 36 pillars. The height of the pillars is about 20 meters and their chapters are created in the form of bullheads (Fig 75).



*Figure 75: Remains of Apadana Palace in Susa Aerial View of Apadana Palace in Susa*

#### **4.1.1.1.2. Persepolis Structures (Apadana Palace, Tachara Palace, Hadish Palace, Moshkouy Palace)**

After building the Apadana Palace in Susa, Darius the Great commanded the construction of a set of royal palaces in Persepolis on the foothills of Rahmat Mountain for hosting guests and representatives from neighboring and subordinate nations of the Persian Empire at the time of the celebrations of the New Year (Nowruz Celebrations). Reviewing the inscriptions left in these palaces, it can be deduced that the construction of Apadana and Tachara Palaces started at the time of Darius the Great. After Darius, his son, Xerxes I, completed Apadana Palace and added the Palace for the Gate of All Nations, Sad Sotun, Hadish, and the Queen's Palaces to this site. After Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I completed the construction of the



Three Gates Palace (the Council Palace) and Archive Building (Mohammadpanah, 2006, p 70) (Fig 76).

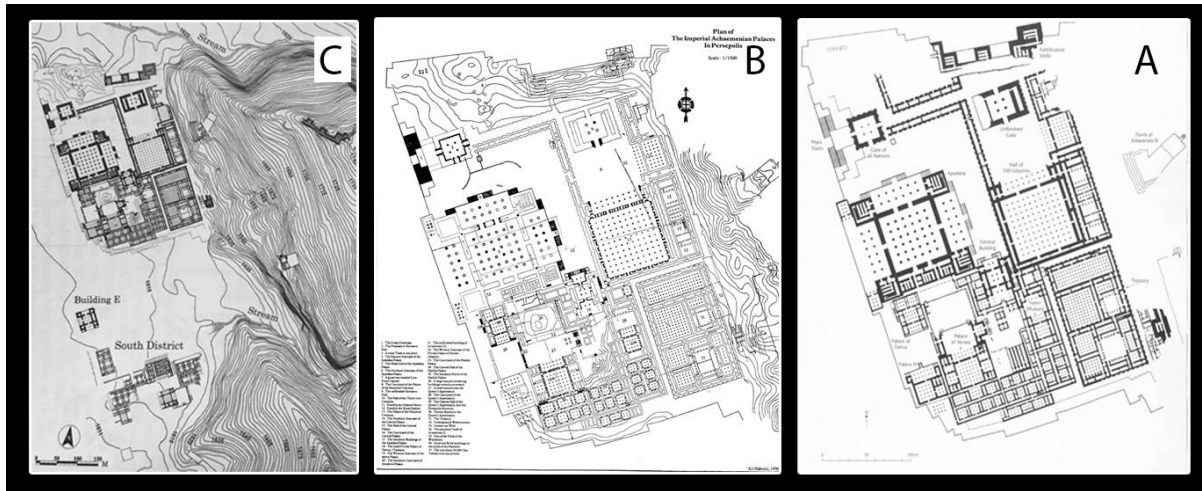


Figure 76: Plan of Persepolis Palaces a: *The Map of Veranda of Persepolis* (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 33; Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014, p 152); b: *Plan of Persepolis Palaces* (Persepolis, Mousavi, 2012, p 11); c: *Plan of Persepolis and Its Southern Area*

Persepolis is located in Marvdasht, Fars Province of Iran, and it was one of the four capital cities of the Achaemenids. The Persepolis palaces are located on a plane with a length of 400 m and a width of 300 m. The architecture of Persepolis is based on repeating square-shaped forms, which have a long history in Persia. The paths, the perspectives, and the human imaginations of the building all indicate the free design of these buildings (Pirnia, 2007, p 80). The walls of Persepolis were made of adobes, fabricated using a metal coating with various colors. The ceiling planks were coated with thick precious metal sheets (Pope, 1984, p 45). When placing the planks on the ceiling, to prevent the pressure from the two ends of the planks on a single load-bearing timber, they would change the arrangement of the planks. On the other hand, each building includes service spaces and a hallway independent from other sections, indicating the inward design of the building (Pirnia, 2007, p 59-73) (Fig 77-78).

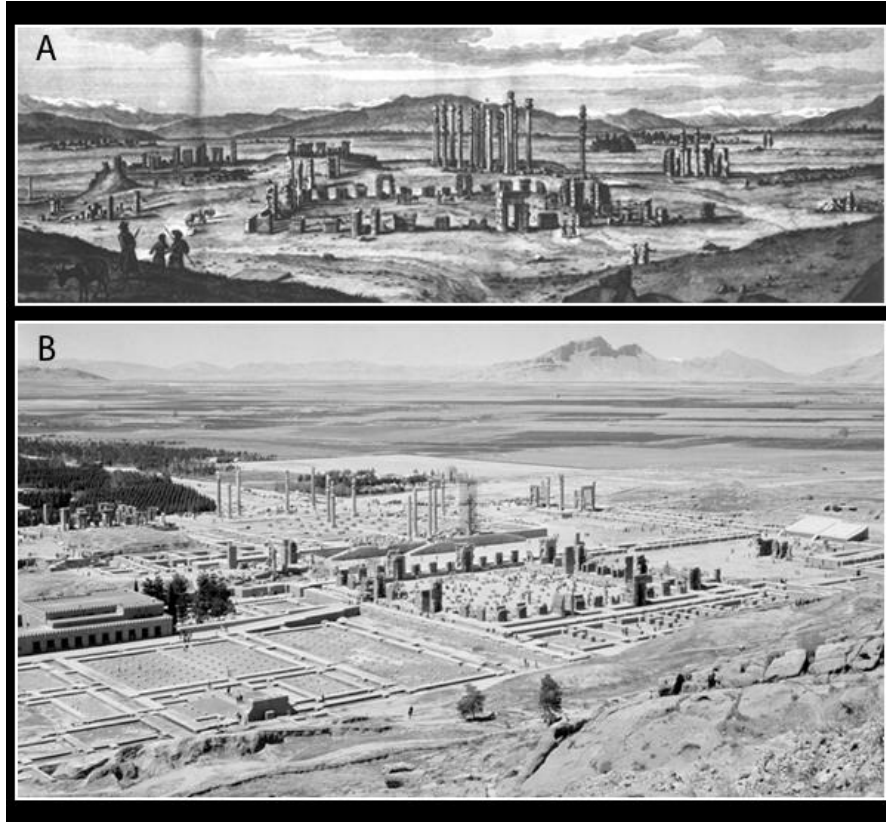


Figure 77: a. An Old Image of Persepolis Ruins from an Old Itinerary (*Forgotten Empire*, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005: 260); b: A General View of Persepolis from the Early 1970s (*Persepolis*, Mousavi, 2012, p 12)

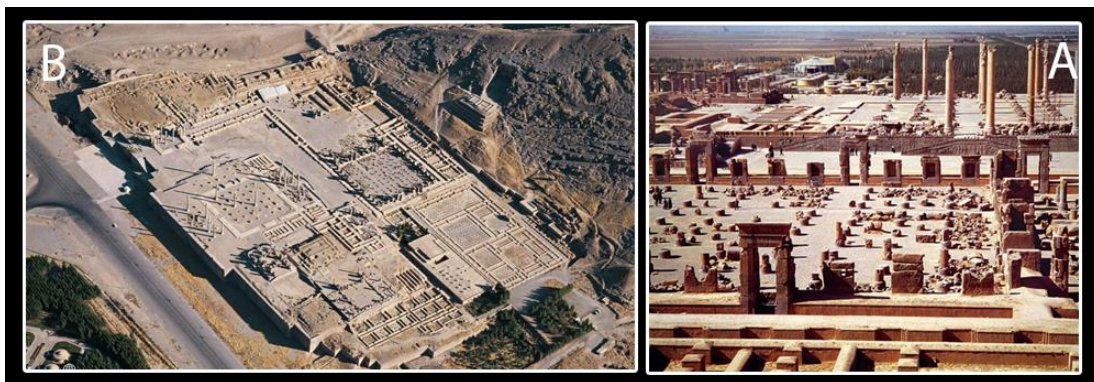


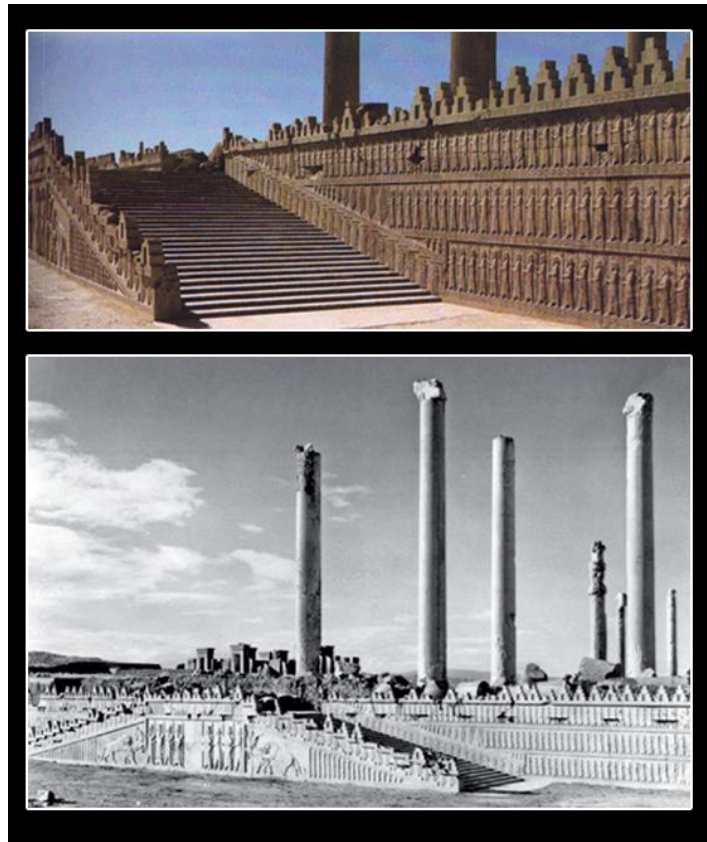
Figure 78: A: Ruins of Darius and Xerxes I Palaces in Persepolis (*Empires of Ancient Persia*, Burgan, 2010, p 37); B: Aerial View of Persepolis, Fars Province, 1976, A Swedish Photographer

**Apadana Palace:** Pillared halls were one of the characteristic and distinguishing features of Achaemenid architecture built during this period in various parts of their realm. The main features of this type of buildings are a central pillared hall, four towers on the corners, and three verandas or three-pillar halls. The lateral towers had an internal staircase leading to a horizontal stage. Sometimes, these structures were built on throne-like levels and only accessible through memorable staircases. In architecture, it is a tradition that this type of buildings is called Apadana in general; however, this is not correct from a technical standpoint.

The term Apadana has been seen in four ancient Persian inscriptions: one is related to the rule of Darius II (424-405 BC), and the other three are from the time of his successor, i.e., Artaxerxes II (405-359 BC). On the other hand, it is said that this term was simply used to refer to the largest buildings as well as buildings with stone (and not wooden) pillars on the pillar bases (Curtis and Razmjou, 2005, 50). In any case, the palace known as Apadana located in the modern site of Persepolis is made using these configurations. This palace has 100 yellow-colored pillars in a  $10 \times 10$  arrangement and there are a lot of carved images into the walls around the hall including the image of Artaxerxes I on the throne, the king battling mythical creatures, and so on.

Apadana was the largest palace in Persepolis constructed by the order of Darius I and completed by Xerxes I and his successors. In this palace, the king would host the representatives of different nations for the Public Audience in Nowruz Celebrations. The floor of this building is about three meters higher than the surrounding area and the floor of the Gate of All Nations. This palace includes a square-shaped central hall with 36 pillars with a height of 19.45 meters, and three verandas in the northern, eastern, and western directions. In the southern direction

of the hall, there are several rooms for the servers. The width of the walls separating the main hall and the verandas were 5.32 meters made of adobe. The interior and exterior façades of the walls were once decorated with colored tiles. Moreover, several rooms for the guards were also built on the southern part of the hall. Eric Schmidt, the excavator of Persepolis, called this palace the best, the most elegant, and the largest building in Persepolis. (Fig 79-80).



*Figure 79: A View of Apadana Palace in Persepolis (Achaemenid Anatolia, Dusinger, 2013). - Northern Stairway of Apadana Palace in Persepolis (Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014, p 154).*





*Figure 80: Northern Side of Apadana Palace, Persepolis (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 35)*

**Tachara palace:** This palace was the exclusive palace of Darius I, constructed on a level three meters higher than the level of Apadana Palace, with a two-way entrance on its southern side. Some authors believe that while this site was called a ‘palace’ by Ernst Herzfeld, it is a modest building not fit for the residence of someone like the King (Razmjou, 2005, p 233). Some propose a bathhouse or kitchen application for this building, which cannot be confirmed with high confidence. In any case, the Tachara Palace includes a central hall with twelve stone columns<sup>119</sup> (and only a southern veranda with pillars in two rows), surrounded from the eastern, northern, and western directions with small rooms probably used for sleeping, cleaning, bathing, changing clothes, or other personal activities of the king. The construction of this building was started by Darius I, and completed by Xerxes I. Later on, Artaxerxes III built another two-way staircase on its western front. Both staircases are decorated with images of servers. The Tachara Palace is currently the Historical Museum of Persian Writing.

The southern veranda of Tachara Palace includes two 4-pillar rows and a toothed stone fence with a thickness of 33 cm and a height of 70 cm with carved palm trees

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<sup>119</sup> The site of this palace includes a 12-pillar hall in the center, an 8-pillar veranda in the south, two 4-pillar rooms in the north, and lateral rooms in the east and west.

and twelve-side lotus flowers on both sides located in front of the veranda. On the southern side of Tachara Palace and two meters lower than the level of its veranda, a relatively wide space is present which is the yard of the palace. This space was probably at first extended to the southern wall of the palace; however, some parts of its southern section have been removed by Artaxerxes III or probably another king (Fig81).



*Figure 81: Southern Side of Darius Palace, Persepolis with Reliefs Depicting Guards and the Image of the Lion (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 35).*

**Hadish palace:** This palace (exclusive palace of Xerxes I) has been called Hadish<sup>120</sup> Palace based on the epigraph on the stone wall of its northern veranda. Hadish Palace is larger than Tachara Palace and it is located in the south of the platform over the highest entrance. Hadish Palace includes a central hall with 36 columns and a 12-column veranda in the north, and a general narrow veranda, similar to a balcony, on the south, as well as several small rooms in the east and west for resting, office work, and living. On the doors of the palace, the images of Xerxes I with his servants can be seen, and it is the only palace whose shelves are engraved with various images. The images on the pillar bases of this palace and Tachara Palace were similar to

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120 Named after Esther or Hadish, the Jewish wife of Xerxes I.

those of Sad Sotun Palace, except for the fact that their pillars and pillar bases are smaller than those of the Sad Sotun palace.

The stones in this building are similar to the stones used in Parse in terms of transparency and carving, and sometimes they are even better and more diverse; however, they have been destroyed and shattered due to a severe earthquake. It can be assumed that a severe earthquake with a lot of power has devastated this elegant palace located on the top of the platform, along with many of its stone structures in a way that many of the gates are destroyed and the others have eroded, and their images have disappeared (Fig 82).



*Figure 82: Hadish Palace in Persepolis (<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news>)*

**Moshkouy palace (harem):** Originally, this palace was built by the order of Xerxes I, and it includes the main hall and a large number of rooms and hallways. The plan of the palace is shaped like an L with a right angle and two rectangular edges, one located in the western direction, i.e., to the south of Hadish palace (known as the

western section of the Harem), and the other one located in the western section of the Treasury. Herzfeld named this part the southeastern palace; however, Schmidt preferred to use the term Harem for this palace. Another researcher, Krefter, selected the name 'the Second Tachara' for this building which seems more accurate. In the main palace of this building, the gates are decorated with the images of Xerxes I and special servants as well as the battle of the king and the monster. This currently comprises the main hall of the Parse Museum and its ceiling is supported by 12 wooden columns. The foundation of the building is based on the stone from the mountain, and the floor of the main hall has been covered by red mortar. It was named 'the Harem' because it was surrounded by a thick wall, and there was only a small entrance on the northwestern side indicating that strangers were not allowed to enter the building.

Although there is not sufficient evidence to call this building the 'Harem', there are some possible reasons for naming it like that, and considering this application for it summarized as follows: (1) the building is constructed on a low level surrounded by other buildings to restrict access; (2) unlike Tachara Palace, one of the entrances has been lost, interpreted as a means to restrict access to the building; (3) on the one side of the building, there are small L-shaped sections. However, the main purpose of this building is not clear yet, and maybe at that time, the researchers were influenced by harems of Ottoman Sultans (Razmjou, 2005, p 243). Currently, a part of Moshkouy Palace has been turned into a museum, library, and administrative office (Fig 83).



Figure 83: Moshkouy Palace reconstructed by Herzfeld and the famous architect, Krefter based on the original plan

#### 4.1.1.2. Tombs

**Mausoleums:** By rejecting the notion put forth by Herodotus positing that Persians had no temples, it can be said that there were some mausoleums at the Achaemenid period. It can be said that while Achaemenid temples were never as elegant and large as the Assyrian and Babylonian temples, the Achaemenid architectural art possesses ancient and old roots (Jafari, 2003).

**Tomb of Cyrus the Great:** When describing the Tomb of Cyrus the Great, Aristobulus of Cassandreia writes: “the tomb of the founder of the Persian dynasty is located in the middle of one of the royal gardens where a water stream flows. Numerous trees and greenery are surrounding the tomb. This tomb is shaped like a short square tower under the shadow of large ancient trees” (Sarfaraz, 2002, p 120). In the front of the palaces, there were a lot of very delicate, beautiful stone fountains with stone pools, some of which have been discovered through archeological excavations (Mehrabani, 2012, p 6). Therefore, while nowadays this site is surrounded mainly by arid and semi-arid lands, in the past, it was similar to a garden or a park, and the excavations and digs indicate the presence of stones related to

stream ways and fountains around the palace. After the death of Cyrus the Great, this building lost its central role (Vanzan, 2012, p 67).

Cyrus the Great respected Pasargadae since it was the place where he defeated Astyages and snatched its Asian empire. The Tomb of Cyrus the Great is considered an important phase of the history of Iranian architecture. This elegant and historical building was the first to be constructed using huge stones stacked on top of each other, which were the only construction material available at the time. Moreover, instead of an arch-shaped ceiling, which was an Elamite architectural element, carvings and voluminous and strong arches connected to a dark room was utilized (Fig 84).



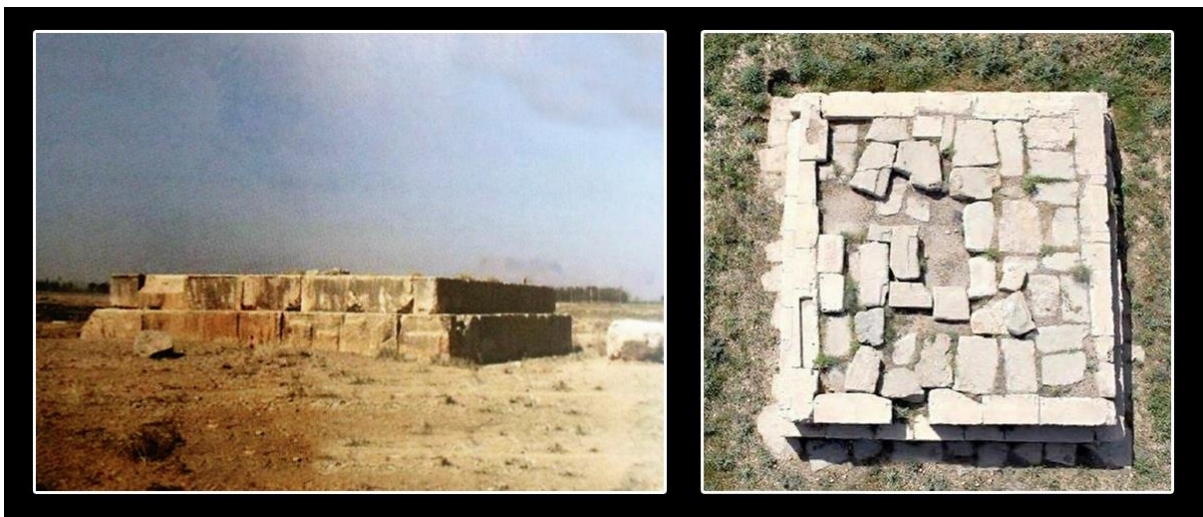
*Figure 84: Tomb of Cyrus the Great, Pasargadae (Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014; Empires of Ancient Persia, Burgan, 2010, p 28; The Persians, Brosius, 2006, p72; Walther Hinz, Darius and the Persians, 2008, Translated by Parviz Rajabi, Tehran: Mahi Publications; Shahbazi, Alireza Shapour, 2007, Comprehensive Guide to Pasargadae, Shiraz, Foundation for Persian Studies)*

**Takht e Rostam (Takht e Gohar):** Ernst Herzfeld believes that this building was called Takht e Rostam by the locals near Naqsh-e Rostam, 4 km north of Persepolis, and it was considered as a tomb for Cambyses II; however, it was incomplete at the time of his death (Hinz, 2008, p 123). The efforts of Herzfeld in 1932 to find documents about the building were not successful. However, later on, during the 1970s, Ann and Giuseppe Tilia found a building nearby, whose construction goes back to the time of Cambyses II based on precise evaluation of stone carving



techniques. These findings convinced some researchers to accept the idea that before his campaign to Egypt, Cambyses II decided to construct a palace garden similar to Pasargadae in this area, and one of the elements of this palace was a building similar to the Tomb of Cyrus the Great; however, it seems that the construction was left incomplete by his death (Fig 85).

Some including Alireza Shapour Shahbazi believe that the stone ruins of Zendane Soleyman in Pasargadae are the tomb of Cambyses II (Shahbazi, 2007, p 96).



*Figure 85: Tomb of Cambyses II, Takht e Rostam*

**Goor Dokhtar Tomb:** The tomb known as Goor Dokhtar is a building similar to the Tomb of Cyrus the Great, located in Dashtestan County of Bushehr Province Iran. With a height of 4.60 m, a length of 5.20 m, and a width of 4.50 m, Goor Dokhtar was constructed using 24 stones with different dimensions and in the shape of rectangular cubes. The Ziggurat-shaped design of this tomb on a stone platform includes three step-shaped stone platforms, a grave room with a loft ceiling, and an entrance on the northeastern side. Inside the small room in the building, there is a small pool, and there is an indentation similar to a picture frame on the tomb, which was probably the place for a tablet. The main building has been built on the low-

slope foothill in the plain. The architecture of the building is similar to that of the Tomb of Cyrus the Great, i.e., a combination of Elamite- Urartian architecture in a way that the platform was built as ziggurats which is a design from Elamite architecture. The sloped ceiling (loft) is an element usually found in Urartian architecture, while the carvings and the main construction of the building using the Achaemenid architectural principles have created a unique work of art in the architectural history of the world (Fig 86).



*Figure 86* Fig 86: Goor Dokhtar Tomb Photography by Ali Gharibi, 2017

#### **4.1.1.3. Rocky Tombs**

With regards to rocky tombs, it has been said that this type of architectural work has been adapted from the architecture of other civilizations and ethnic groups as these tombs are similar to Median analogues carved into mountain rocks (Fig 87). These tombs had a doorway, and their ceilings would be placed on a column (Vanzan, 2012, p 114).

The tombs of Artaxerxes II (405-359 BC) and Artaxerxes III (359-338 BC) have been carved like crypts into the rocks of Rahmat Mountain. There are two stone



graves inside the room in the Tomb of Artaxerxes II but three in the Tomb of Artaxerxes III. The Tomb of Darius III is located in the south of Parse which is incomplete and only its top section depicts the image of the king in front of a firepot. The rest of the tomb has been left incomplete without any carvings.



*Figure 87: rocky tombs Left: Fakhrika Catacomb, Right: Dokan-e-Davood Catacomb*

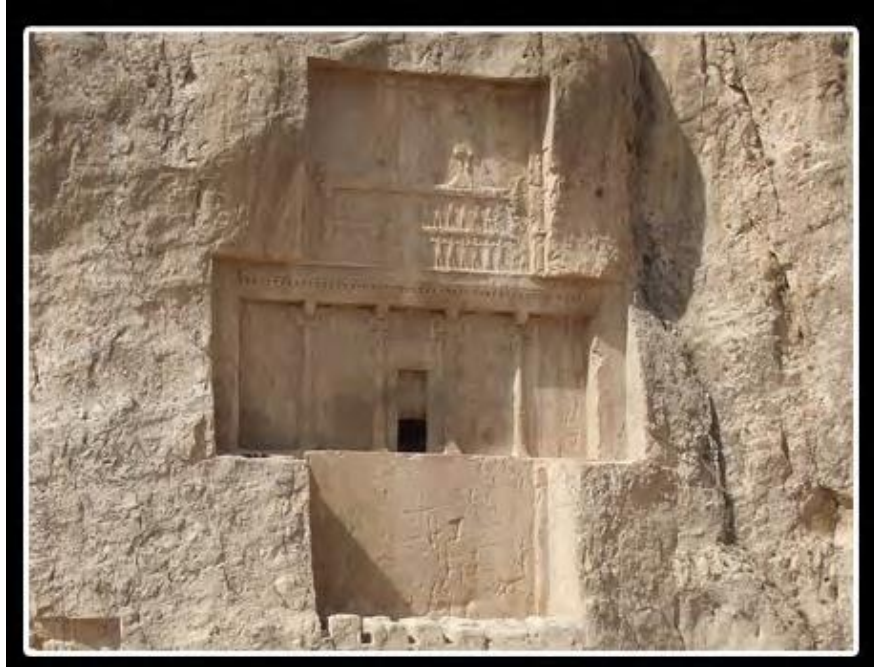
#### **4.1.1.3.1. Naqsh-e Rostam (the Tombs of Darius the Great, Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I, Darius II)**

Naqsh-e Rostam is located in the north of Marvdasht 6 km from Persepolis on the foothills of a mountain called Hussein Kuh by the locals. After Darius the Great, the Achaemenid kings constructed their tombs on the walls of this mountain, and the tombs belong to Darius the Great, Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I, and Artaxerxes II, in chronological order. Richard Frye believes that these tombs had to be carved into the rocks of the mountain to prevent the pollution of the earth due to touching human corpses (Frye, 1974, p 383-386) (Fig 88).



*Figure 88: Long shot of Naqsh-e Rostam*

**Tomb of Darius the Great:** The tomb of Darius the Great is placed 26 meters higher than the ground level, and an epigraph in this tomb proves that the tomb belongs to Darius I. Darius the Great passed away in October 486 BC, and his corpse was placed into this tomb that he had carved into the heart of the rocky mountain. Darius started the construction of his tomb along with the construction of Apadana Palace in Susa and Persepolis in 519 BC, and its construction was completed a short while after his death. The design and external façade of the tomb as well as its interior features are all innovative and novel. The external façade of the tomb, which is carved 60 m higher than the ground level, is similar to a swastika with a height of 22 m and arms with a width of 10.90 m. At the upper section of the tomb, Darius is sitting on a throne being carried by people from various nations, while the symbol of Fravashi is carved above him and the royal firepot is carved in front of him. Inside the tomb, nine graves are indicating that along with Darius, his close family members are also buried there (Fig 89).



*Figure 89: Tomb of the Achaemenid kings on Naqsh-e Rostam Tombs of Darius the Great*

**The Tomb of Xerxes I:** The Tomb of Xerxes I is carved in the form of a cross 100 m to the east and northeast of the Tomb of Darius the Great. The symbol of Fravashi and the moon are carved above the cross, while below the cross, Xerxes I is depicted while extending his hand towards the Fravashi and the firepot in front of him. Under the feet of the king, there is a throne being carried by people from different nations. These people include those from the easternmost realms of the empire in India and Sogdia to the westernmost realms of Egypt and Libya. The entrance gate of the tomb is 3 m by 6.60 m, and the tomb only has one room directly in front of the entrance gate, and there are three graves in it. It is not clear who is buried alongside Xerxes I in the graves. The graves are much simpler than those built in the tomb of Darius the Great. It is possible that the middle grave, whose lid is larger than those of the other graves, belongs to Queen Amestris, the daughter of Otanes. The third grave is assumed to belong to the crown prince that was built in case he died before the king (Fig 90).



*Figure 90: Tomb of the Achaemenid kings on Naqsh-e Rostam Tombs of Xerxes I*

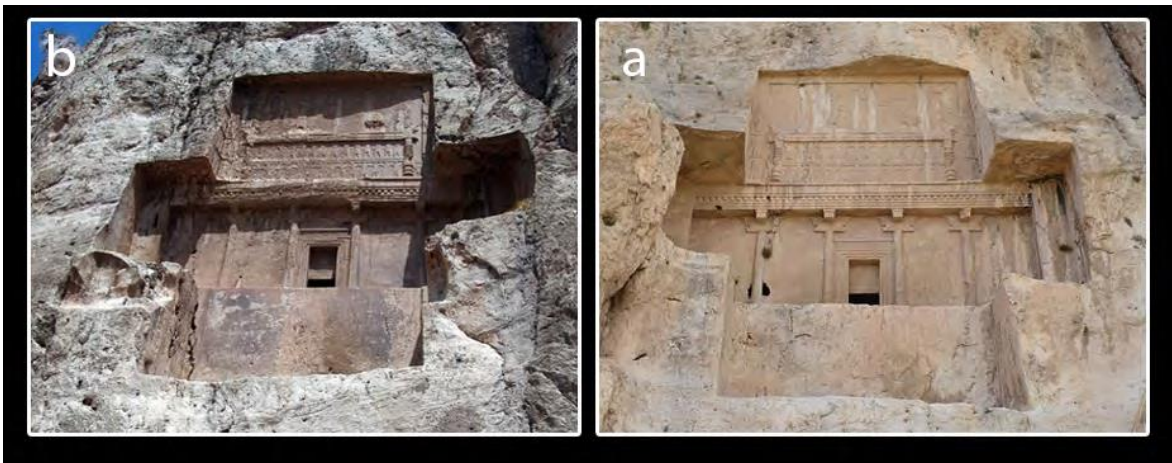
**Tomb of Artaxerxes I:** The Tomb of Artaxerxes I is carved at a distance of 37 m to the left of the Tomb of Darius the Great in the form of a cross with a height of 22 m. The features and general design of the tomb are similar to those of Darius and Xerxes I; however, the inside of the tomb is similar to that of the Tomb of Darius the Great with three small rooms with some differences. The inaccuracy and lack of skill of the stone carvers were so high that the hallway is an irregular rectangle with low height, and it is not parallel to the front of the tomb at all. Its southeastern corner is only a couple of cm from the front wall, while its northwestern corner is extended into the mountain. The reason for attributing this tomb to Artaxerxes I is that it lacks the delicacies and fine design of the period of Darius the Great and Xerxes I, so it must have been carved after the reign of Xerxes I (Fig 91a).

**The Tomb of Darius II:** The Tomb of Darius II is carved with a distance of 33 m from the southwest side of the tomb of Artaxerxes I in the form of a cross, and its general design is similar to the tombs in Naqsh-e Rostam. This tomb is exactly in front of the building known as Cube of Zoroaster located 45 m away. However, this



location was not selected voluntarily because the distance between the Tomb of Darius the Great and the Tomb of Artaxerxes I is 37 m, and the same distance is followed for the next tomb.

The exterior façade of the tomb is similar to that of the other tombs; however, the face of the king is severely damaged, and it is not possible to compare it with the faces of the other kings. The ring around the image of Ahura Mazda in front of the king is flat and modest similar to the Tomb of Artaxerxes I. However, unlike the images depicted on the three previous tombs, the two wings of Ahura Mazda include a larger number of vertical lines as if the horizontal lines are under these vertical lines (Fig 91b).



*Figure 91: Tomb of the Achaemenid kings on Naqsh-e Rostam Tombs of Darius the Artaxerxes I (a)-Darius II (b)*

#### **4.1.1.3.2. Rahmat Mountain (Tombs of Artaxerxes II, Artaxerxes III, and Darius III)**

The Tomb of Artaxerxes III is carved on a rock with a height of 40 m from the ground level. This tomb is located in front of Sad Sotun Palace in Persepolis, and it has two rooms with two columns. On the upper section of this tomb, there is an image carved of the representatives of various nations, carrying the royal crown. The king is depicted on the top of the frame and an image of a winged man is carved in

front of him. The columns in the Tomb of Artaxerxes III are placed on the back of two-headed bulls, similar to instances discovered in the palaces of Persepolis.

The design of the Tomb of Artaxerxes III is similar to that of the Tomb of Darius the Great in Naqsh-e Rostam. There is a stone platform constructed in front of the tomb. This platform is on top of a row of stairs fabricated from small and large stones. The stones used in these stairs are not glued together by any mortars.

There is another tomb 500 m to the south of Sofah with a low altitude from the ground that is not complete and it was previously attributed to Darius III who only reigned for a couple of years characterized by rebellion and wars. However, Wolfram Kleiss and Peter Calmeyer accurately state that the reason that this tomb was left unfinished was that the structure of the mountain was unstable and it was not suitable for continuing work. They argue that from a technical standpoint, especially the type of metal fasteners used in the tomb, the shape of the fire pot, and the platform for the royal throne, the tomb was the initial version of the southern tomb in Persepolis attributed to Artaxerxes II for technical reasons and its reliefs, especially the shape of the king's crown and the state of the people depicted on the tomb. This tomb in the south of Persepolis is the only Achaemenid tomb with tablets for introducing the king buried in it, similar to the Tomb of Darius the Great. However, the northern tomb lacks such tablets, and from a technical standpoint and based on the way the images are carved into it, it is similar to the artwork of the time of Artaxerxes III, and it has been attributed to this king (Fig 92).



*Figure 92: Tomb of the Achaemenid kings on Mount Rahmat*

### **4.1.3. Temples**

In the ancient civilizations, the beliefs of people about the gods and the kings and how to perform various rituals and ceremonies were highly important. Among the ancient ethnic groups, one of the most important ritualistic procedures was worshipping the gods and the kings. These ritualistic acts were often performed in different ancient civilizations with the slightest differences. Worshipping acts among these civilizations were often related to praying, worshipping, or acts based on respect (kissing or bowing), or acts for respecting the gods when praying. Such acts were also referred to using terms such as “respect out of fear, liking, culturing, obeying, and modesty, or bowing down” (Buck, 1949, p 1469). These rituals were often performed in specific locations called temples. Therefore, temples had a direct relation to religious rituals and funerals. The most prominent temples during the Achaemenid period were the fire temples (Atash Kadeh or Atash Gah in Persian) of Anahita and Mithra.

#### 4.1.3.1. Fire Temples

Fire temples were called Atash Kadeh or Atash Gah in Persian and both have the same meaning. However, since both are complex words, one ending in Kadeh and the other in Gah, exploring the constitutive parts of these words may help in better understanding their meanings. Gah in Persian means time as well as place and location (Amid, 1985, p 1674). Therefore, we are ultimately encountering a term meaning ‘the place for keeping the fire’ as a sacred place where the flames as a symbol of divine light are always present. Some of the most prominent instances of such places during the Achaemenid period were fire temples in Pasargadae (Zendane Soleyman) built by the order of Cyrus the Great. Another one is in Naqsh-e Rostam (Cube of Zoroaster) near the Tomb of Darius the Great which might have been built by his order. However, there is a level of controversy about the use of these two structures as fire temples<sup>121</sup>.

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121 Tomb or Fire Temple? The use of the Cube of Zoroaster has always been a source of controversy among archeologists and researchers, and there have been various perspectives and interpretations about its applications. However, the issue that renders its interpretation more difficult is the presence of Zendane Soleyman in Pasargadae since any possibility must be evaluated based on its conditions as well, and a similar interpretation must be provided for both structures. Having contemplated various possibilities for the intended application of the Cube of Zoroaster, Herzfeld, Schmidt, and Stronach failed to reach a conclusive result.

Roman Ghirshman believes that the Cube of Zoroaster was a fire temple hosted the Sacred Fire, and it was used for performing religious rituals. Both structures had thirty steps indicating that the intent behind building the rooms in these structures was to visit them regularly which is in line with the idea that they were fire temples. However, the closed design of the building and the lack of an exit pathway for the smoke inside the room creates serious doubts about this conclusion. If these were not fire temples, then it is hard to believe such strong and monolithic single-room buildings were constructed for a purpose other than burying the kings.

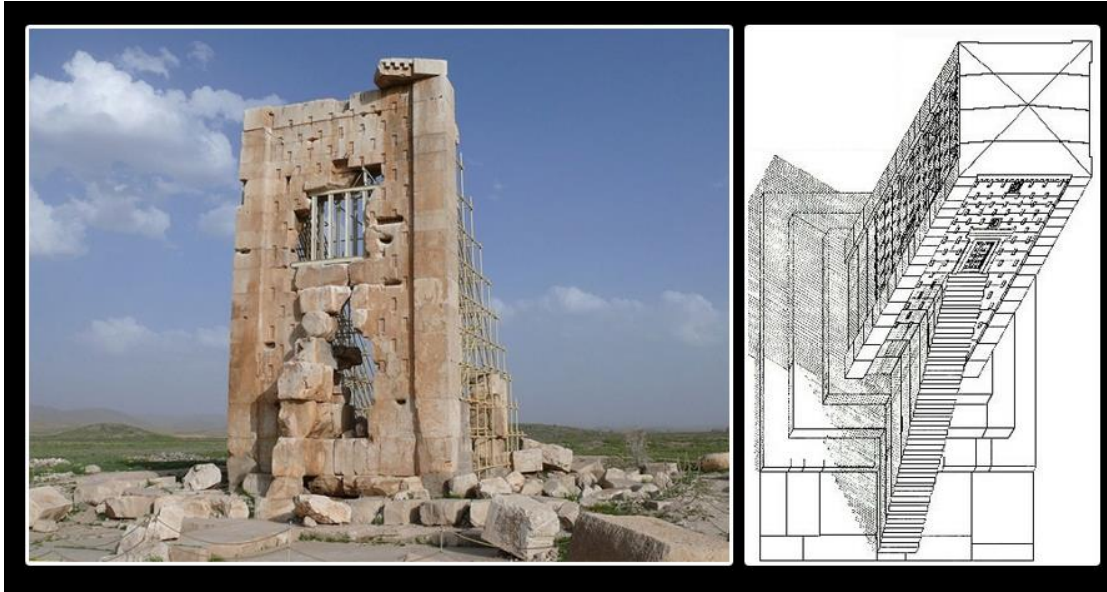
Ferdinand Weisbach and Alexander Demandt believe that these two buildings are the tombs of Achaemenid kings, and they emphasize two interesting notions in this regard, i.e., firstly the design and size of Cube of Zoroaster and Zendane Soleyman make them mausoleums appropriate for powerful rulers, and secondly, the strong and monolithic foundation of both structures were probably meant to prevent contact between the corpse of the Zoroastrian king with the earth, which is considered a sacred element. Von Biseng believes that the Cube of Zoroaster was probably the tomb of Cambyses II, the son and successor of Cyrus the Great, and the conqueror of Egypt. Among the Iranian archeologists, the late Ali Sami and Shapour Shahbazi believed that the Cube of Zoroaster was probably the tomb of one of the early Achaemenid kings. On the other hand, because the presence of steps is in conflict with the design of the tombs, which were built in a way to be inaccessible for people, these cannot be considered tombs, forcing us to ultimately consider these two structures as fire temples.



#### **4.1.3.1.1.Fire Temples of Pasargadae (Zendane Soleyman)**

They first built a platform using carved stones for performing religious rituals and maintaining the sacred fire in Pasargadae, and then a short distance away, they built two fire temples with steps for performing religious rituals and fire ceremonies in open space (Kambakhsh Fard, 1995, p 42). It seems that they would bring out the fire for a specific ritual from the main fire temple (Zendane Soleyman) which was located nearby.

The building of the main fire temple has been constructed using a combination of stones, dry mortar, and alabaster, while using black limestone for building its blind windows. Currently, the only wall survived of the temple is supported by scaffolding put up by an Italian Group for maintaining and repairing the tomb. The design of the tomb is like a four-cornered tower; however, only one wall remains of the original structure. When visiting Zendane Soleyman, you can see rectangular-shaped indentations in its walls, which were probably created as a means of beautification. Its height is about 14 m and the length of its base is about 23.7 m, placed on a three-step platform, with an entrance in the northwestern direction, which has an altitude of 50.7 m from the ground level. In the past, by walking up 33 steps, they would access the room at the top of the tower (Fig 93).



*Figure 93: Structure Known as Zendane Soleyman in Pasargadae (www.wikipedia.org)*

#### **4.1.3.1.2. The Cube of Zoroaster**

The Cube of Zoroaster is a four-cornered stone building with some steps, and 46 m away from the mountain. This construct is exactly in front of the Tomb of Darius II. In 1936, only two-thirds of this structure was visible since one-third was buried under the soil. During the excavations, the lower part was discovered as well, and the historians found some inscriptions in the building. Currently, the buried part is completely visible, and the surrounding lands are still a couple of meters higher than the main level of the building. The materials used in this building include white limestone, and its height, inclusive of the three-pronged steps, reaches 14.12 m. Moreover, it has only one entrance gate. This gate is connected to the small room inside the building through a 30-step stairway (Fig 94 -95).

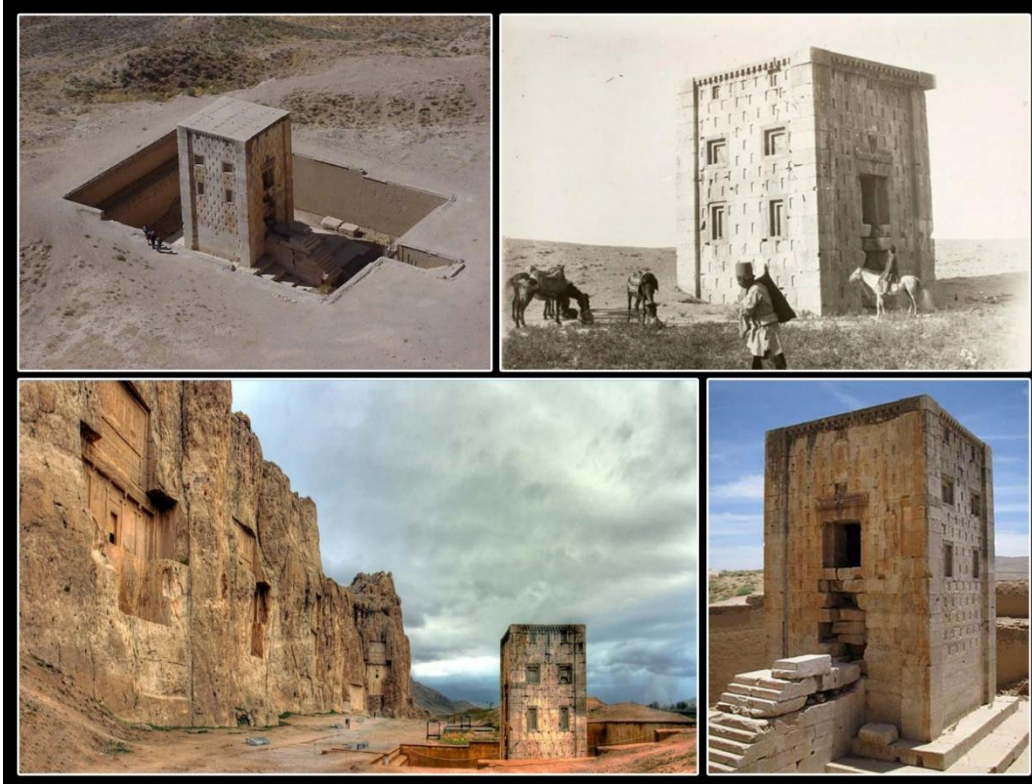


Figure 94: Cube of Zoroaster the Arrangement and Connections of the Stones and the Design of the Stairway (Motamedmanesh, 2018, p 19)

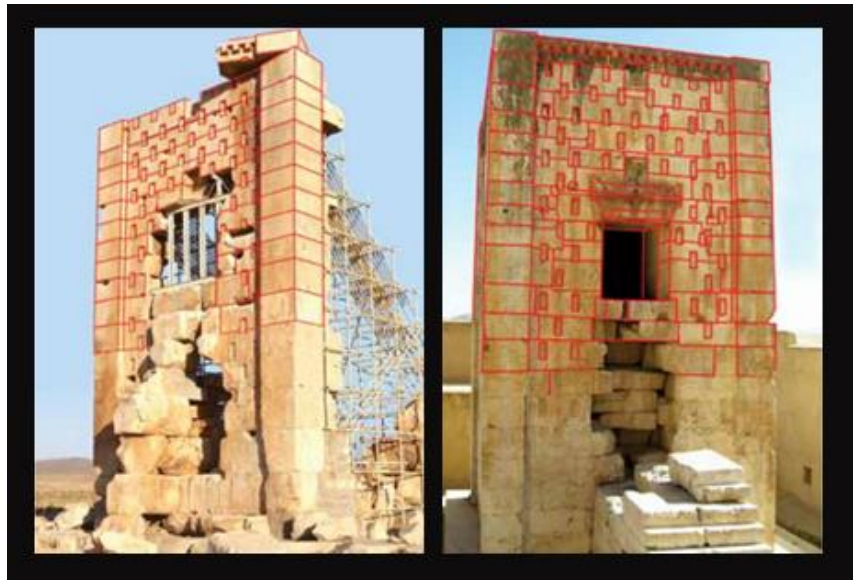


Figure 95: Similarities between Cube of Zoroaster and Zendane Soleyman

#### **4.1.3.2. Anahita and Mithra Temples**

The Temples of Anahita and Mithra (Aryan gods) were built in various cities upon the order of Artaxerxes II. Sources mention the presence of these buildings in Pasargadae and Susa, and apparently, the Anahita Temple was the largest of its type in northeastern Persia (see Schmidt, 1998, p24; Benveniste, 1975, p 55).

#### **4.1.2. Sculpture Carving**

In general, sculpting along with other artwork types and media, such as painting, played a role beyond appearance, and the Achaemenid kings were completely aware of its promotional value. There are a few sculptures that survived this period. For instance, in the bust of a young princess made of lapis<sup>122</sup>, apparently discovered from Persepolis, the eyes of the sculpture have been visualized as natural eyes using a glass glaze to give a special level of appeal and peace to the bust. This artwork is an example of sculpture carving (Fig96).

The figure of Darius in Susa is another sculpting artifact. In this sculpture, Darius is standing on a platform, and the guards and soldiers are carved under his image that it seems they are carrying Darius in their hands. This sculpture has been made using an Egyptian style (Fig 97).

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122 This bust is probably the bust of the Queen of the Achaemenid court, i.e., Atossa.



Figure 96: young princess made of lapis Discovered in the North of Sad Sotun Hall, Persepolis, Kept at National Museum of Iran (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005)



Figure 97: Darius Statute and a-Darius Statute (Marble) From 496-492 BC, Discovered in Susa in Khuzestan Province of Iran, Kept at National Museum of Iran (Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014, p 92)b- Silver Statute, Persian Official in Tourist Clothing (Empires of Ancient Persia, Burgan, 2010, p 46)

### **4.1.3.Stone Carving and Engraving**

Due to religious necessity, stone carving exceeded its ornamental and limited scope and became an eternal art. During the Achaemenid period, tablets, inscriptions, reliefs, seals, and some architectural artifacts and related ornaments were very important due to the lack of written sources (e.g., those seen in ancient Greece), and along with the religious aspects mentioned earlier with historical content. In this section, epigraphs and reliefs are explored as important instances of carving and engraving artworks.

#### **4.1.3.1.Epigraphy**

This field mainly deals with writing systems and written works which are not only important due to their historical documentation aspects but are also highly valuable from an aesthetic perspective. The epigraphs in this period were written in three languages, i.e., Ancient Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian. It should be noted that before discovering the language of the Achaemenid epigraphs and revealing the mysteries of the cuneiform writing system<sup>123</sup>, the only available sources for the history and art of the Achaemenids were the written sources and documents of Greek and Roman historians, and parts of the stories in the Bible.

While some Achaemenid epigraphic artwork would be transferred to remote satrapies, the majority of multilingual epigraphs were in the central region of this empire for the public to see. For instance, these epigraphs would be displayed in palaces and royal tombs in Pasargadae, in Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam, in Susa (Elam) and Babylonia, and on mountain rocks in Behistun and Alvand. However, some exceptional artifacts, outside of Iran, include a trilingual inscription from

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123 This happened in 1618 AD when the Europeans first encountered this writing system. The year 1802 AD was another historical turning point in decoding this writing system. Grotefend, the German epigraphist, and Sir Henry Rawlinson, a British army officer, were among those who tried to completely decode the cuneiform writing system.



Xerxes in a castle located in Van in eastern Anatolia and the stone tablet of Suez Canal related to Darius I (Stolper, 2005, p 22) (Fig 98).

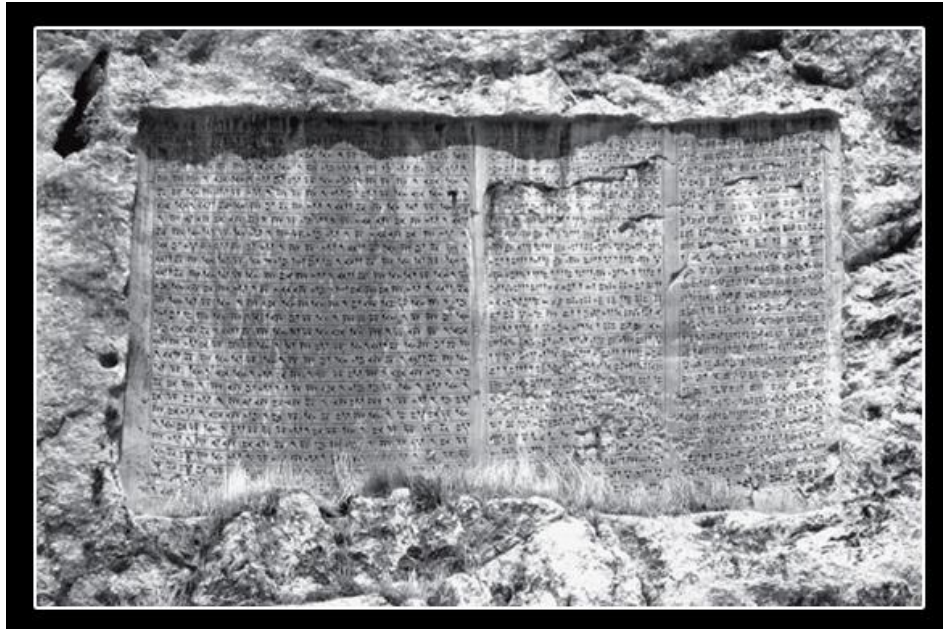


Figure 98: The Trilingual Inscription of Xerxes I in Van (Achaemenid Anatolia, Dusinberre, 2013)

Behistun is a place located six leagues from Kermanshah, which is also known as ‘Baghestan’. There are the Darius Inscriptions<sup>124</sup> along with some epigraphs and engravings at this place. One of the most valuable and comprehensive epigraphic artifacts of the Achaemenid period is the Behistun Inscriptions, located near a mountain with the same name. This famous inscription is one of the best literary and historical documents of Iran. It was in Behistun that Rawlinson, the British army officer, finally managed to read the text of the ancient Persian writings after years of painstaking effort, solving one of the greatest historical mysteries. The language of this inscription is Ancient Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian. In Behistun Inscription,

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124 Small Behistun Inscriptions: I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, the king of Persia, the king of countries, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achaemenid. King Darius says: That is why we are called Achaemenids; from antiquity we have been noble; from antiquity has our dynasty been royal. King Darius says: Eight of my dynasty were kings before me; I am the ninth. Nine in succession we have been kings.

Darius discusses issues including his lineage, the legitimacy of his rule, and his triumph over enemies and rebels. More than facts about the events of his reign, this inscription is more focused on proving the position and legitimacy of the king, and therefore, more than being a historical document, it is promotional (Fig 99-100).



Figure 99: Behistun Inscription (Achaemenid Anatolia, Dusinberre, 2013)

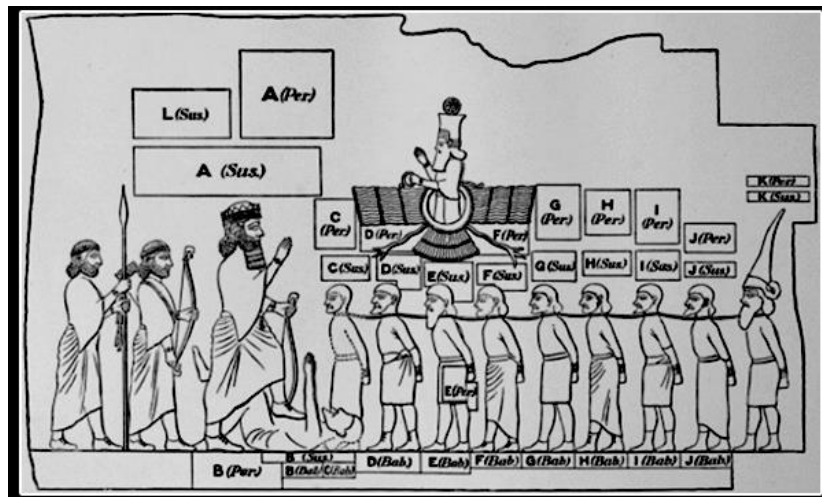
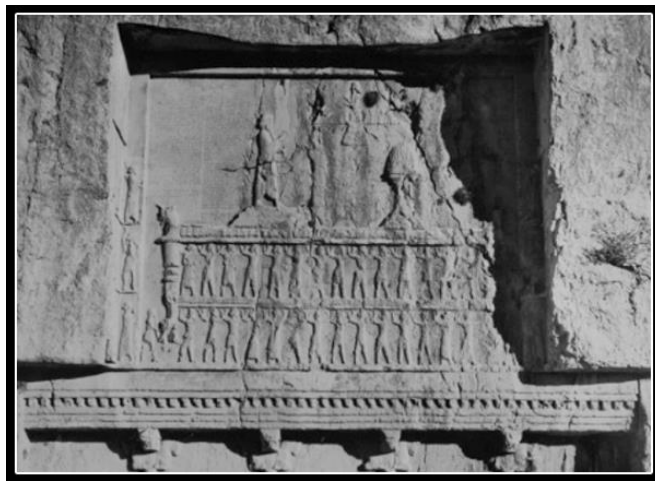


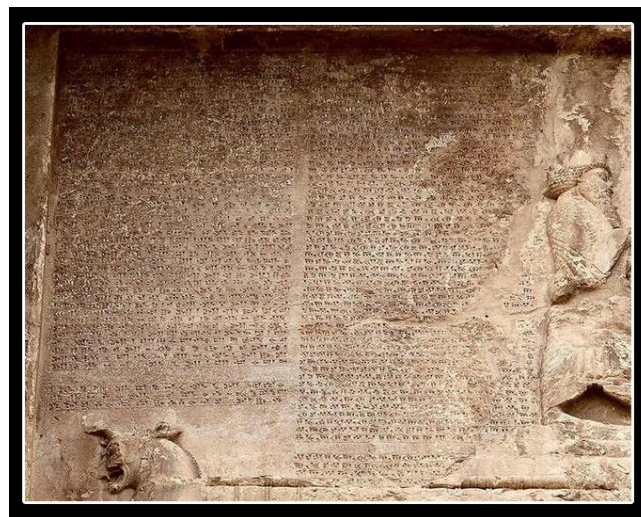
Figure 100: Drawing of Darius Epigraph in Behistun in Different Languages (Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014, p 73) (Capital letters indicate separate inscriptions and the abbreviations Per., Sus., and Bab. indicate Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian, respectively)



In Naqsh-e Rostam, located a league from Persepolis, four tombs belong to the Achaemenid kings. The credibility of the Tomb of Darius the Great has been proved, but the kings buried in the other tombs are unknown. The most important inscription in Naqsh-e Rostam is the Inscription of Darius, carved in Persian, Elamite, and Assyrian languages. In this inscription, Darius lists the lands under his reign, and the limits of his realm, while recounting the characteristics of an ideal king (Fig 101-102).



*Figure 101: Tomb of Darius I in Naqsh-e Rostam (Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014)*



*Figure 102: Inscription of Darius in Naqsh-e Rostam*

In the inscriptions in Susa, some information about Darius I is also observed, providing a contextual overlap with the inscriptions in Behistun and Naqsh-e Rostam, while discussing the construction of the Darius Palace, the subordinate nations, and the materials used in the construction.

Some other instances of less important inscriptions include Cyrus Inscription in Mashhad-e Morghab District (crystal cylinder discovered in Egypt), Xerxes I Inscription (Persepolis), two inscriptions from Darius I and Xerxes I in Alvand Mountain (Hamedan), the Inscription of Artaxerxes I (marble vase discovered in Egypt), and the Inscription of Darius II (Persepolis) (Bayat, 1984, p 14-16) (Fig 103).



*Figure 103: A Version of Cuneiform Inscriptions in Persepolis (Persepolis, Mousavi, 2012, p 118)*

#### **4.1.3.2. Reliefs**

Along with the above-mentioned inscriptions, the Achaemenid reliefs are among the most important and revealing sources to understand the cultural identity of this period. Engraving reliefs in this period characterized by balance, strength,

explicitness, and symmetry, display mildness, restraint, and peace corresponding to a large and lively construction without any sign of violence, war, and struggle usually seen in Assyrian statues (Pope, 1984, p 35-38). The carvings of the stone, both at the level of delicate protuberance and the etched details, display an excellent and unique style. While possibly Persians were inspired by Assyrian or Egyptian reliefs when creating these artifacts, there is a significant difference between those styles and the style of the Persian reliefs. For instance, the images are more round and they are protruding more relative to their background. Emphasis on details, such as the veins and muscles of the figures is less pronounced, and perhaps most importantly, the figures are depicted with a higher level of organic unity since the figures are shown from a natural lateral view.

Some of the most important locations where Achaemenid reliefs can be found are Persepolis, Behistun, Pasargadae, and Naqsh-e Rostam.

The most important and prolific Achaemenid reliefs can be found in Persepolis. These reliefs include kings, soldiers, guards, representatives of subordinate nations, and taxpayers. For instance, Apadana Palace and its stairways, one of the significant locations full of images and reliefs, display characteristic reliefs depicting the soldiers and the imperial army who are lined up in order in front of each other with complete symmetry. These figures have been created in an official and elegant style with special stability indicating the bond between stone carving and architecture in the Achaemenid period. The main reliefs in this palace include Persian and Median nobles and the representatives of various nations. Moreover, the battle between the lion and bull, as a symbol of the spring equinox and the end of winter, is also depicted. In addition to Apadana Palace, this image is also seen in Tachara and Hadish palaces as well.

The treasury of Persepolis, which was once used for storing the royal treasures and mythical wealth of the Achaemenids, hosts the relief of Xerxes I. This site was constructed at the time of Darius I and it was expanded during the reign of Xerxes I. The abovementioned relief was apparently at the Apadana yard at first, and it was later moved to this location. In this engraved relief, the king (Xerxes I) is depicted as he is holding the imperial mast and the lotus flower sitting on a throne. The lotus flower was a symbol of royalty.

The king fighting mythical creatures, the king having an audience with the public, the Faravashi, the images of plants and trees, the winged lion, draft animals (along with taxpayers), and charioteers are all among the engraved artifacts in Persepolis, displaying the historical, cultural, and functional identity of this structure.

The epigraph of Darius I in Behistun (apart from what was mentioned earlier) is another example of the carving artwork of this period. Along with the themes and concepts latent in its writing, it is also accompanied by images of figures. As noted earlier, this epigraph is written in three languages, i.e., Elamite, Babylonian, and Ancient Persian, and it discusses the triumph of Darius I over the rebels (Gaumata the Magus, and the story of False Bardiya). In this epigraph, Darius is depicted in a larger size relative to other figures in front of nine bounded rebels, while he is stomping on one of them. The Faravashi symbol is depicted over his head, and two guards (an archer and a spearman) are standing behind the king.

Pasargadae was the geographical location Cyrus the Great chose as his headquarters after ascending to the throne, and he started the construction of huge buildings including palaces, temples, and tombs. One of the most famous reliefs that remained in Pasargadae is the image of the winged man which was once installed in a hall in one of the palaces in this city. This semi-protruded figure is depicted from a profile

view and it has a tall crown on its head. The figure is positioned in a praying stance, and the wings give him a heavenly and supernatural aura. Some believe that this winged man is the mythical manifestation of Cyrus the Great himself.

As noted earlier, the tombs of some Achaemenid kings are located in Naqsh-e Rostam. In this location, the carved figure of Darius with a toothed crown on his head and a bow in his hand can be seen on the top of his tomb. The royal fire and the Faravashi are among the other images carved into this rock. The royal fire, the Faravashi, the crescent moon, spearmen, archers, and a king being carried by servants and guards are some of the main common images seen in the rocky tombs of Naqsh-e Rostam, providing these buildings with a common historical identity, and they can be evaluated as a continuation of the relief carving tradition of the Achaemenids. (Fig 104-111)

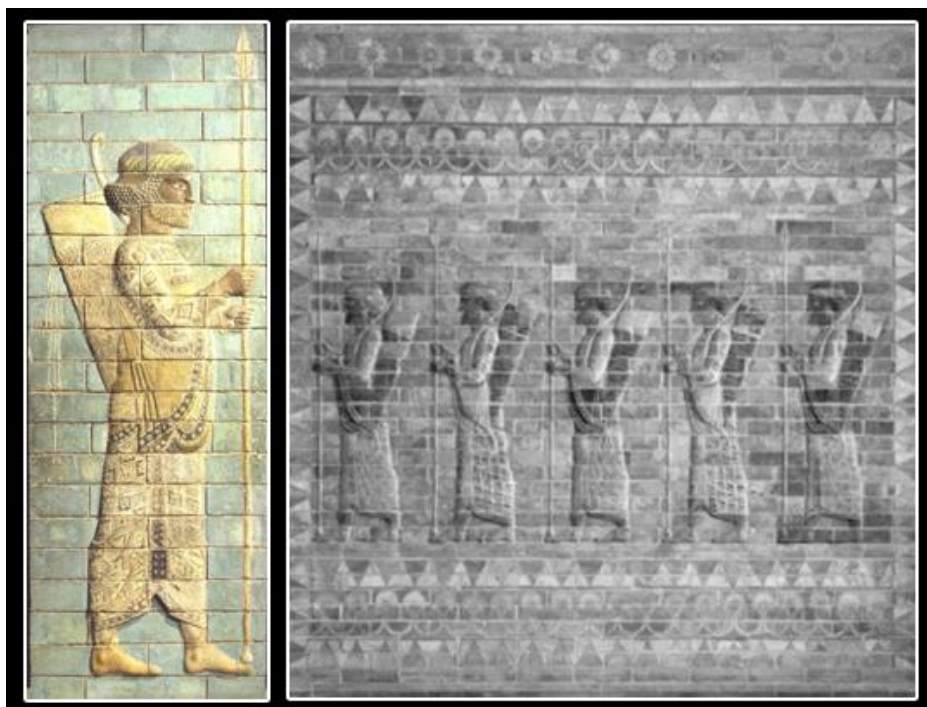


Figure 104 :The Image of a Soldier Guard , Enameled Bricks, Susa (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 87)- (Ancient Persia, Waters, 2014, p 73)



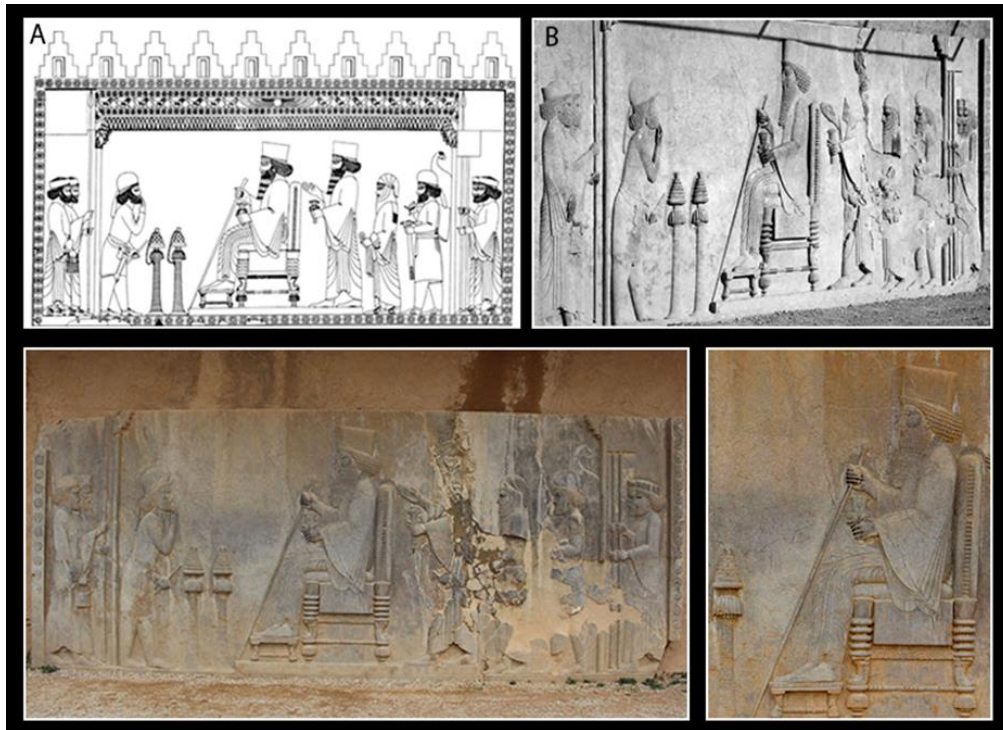


Figure 105: Drawing and Reconstruction of the King during Public Audience, Persepolis (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis and Simpson, 2005, p 279); B: Relief of the King's Public Audience, Apadana Stairway (*The Persians*, Brosius, 2006, p 35)

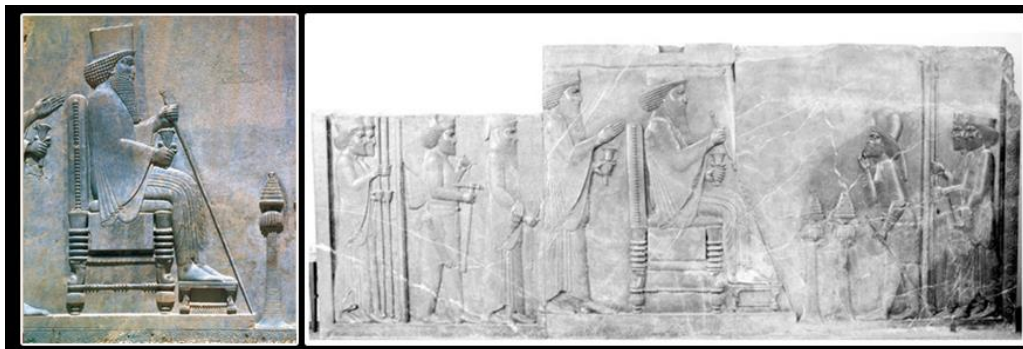


Figure 106: Relief Depicting Darius I (*Empires of Ancient Persia*, Burgan, 2010, p 34)- (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 277)- (*Ancient Persia*, Waters, 2014, p 127)

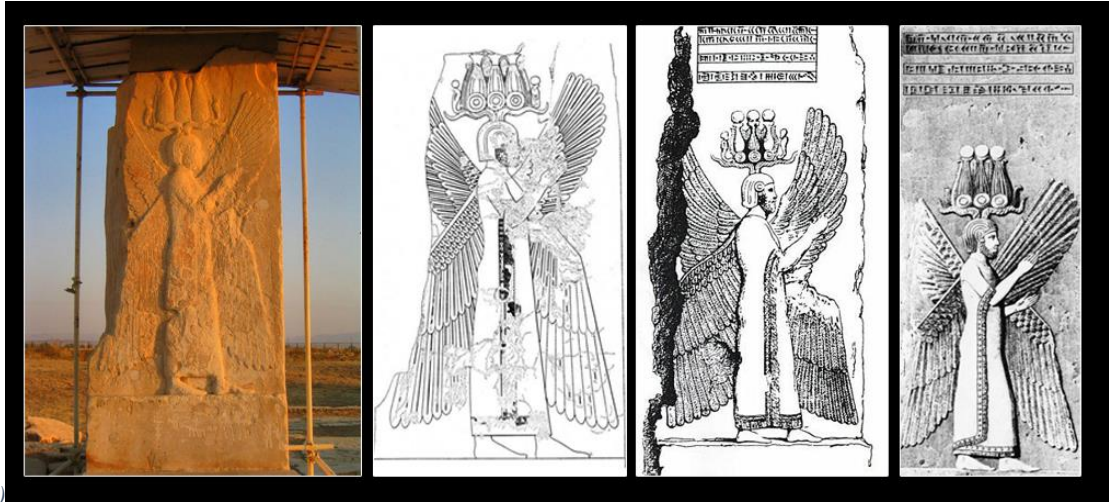


Figure 107: The Image of Winged GuardianTourist in 19th Century in Iran (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis and Simpson, 2005, p 268); The Image of Winged Guardian (Sami, 1996, p 108)



Figure 108: Relief Depicting a Man Carrying a ContainerHadish Hall (Exclusive Palace of Darius), Southern Stairway, Persepolis (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 236)



Figure 109: Persian Nobles Walking up the Stairs of Persepolis (*The Persians*, Brosius, 2006, p 75)- (*Empires of Ancient Persia*, Burgan, 2010, p 18)- (*Empires of Ancient Persia*, Burgan, 2010, p 21)

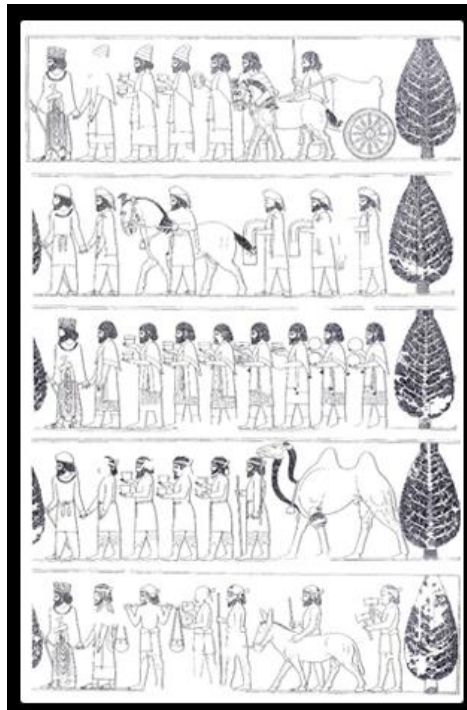


Figure 110: Drawing of Reliefs in Persepolis (*Forgotten Empire*, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 65)





Figure 111: Relief in Darius Palace Relief Depicting People Carrying Food Items Hadish Hall (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 235)- (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 236)

### 4.3. Industrial arts

Handicrafts refer to delicate artwork and crafts which have been developed for centuries while maintaining their roots and traditions and going through various stages of growth indicating the culture of a nation. These artworks are usually functional tools. During the Achaemenid period, working with metals was common for manufacturing containers, tools, jewelry, and coins, while stones, clay, and ceramic would be used for fabricating tablets, seals, stone containers, and decorations for buildings. On the other hand, cloth making, carpet weaving, and glasswork were among the handicrafts of the time; however, due to their perishable nature, fewer examples of them have remained over time.

#### 4.3.1. Metal Work

The metalwork industry developed in this period by relying on the experiences of previous craftsmen and metal workers. The Achaemenid Empire began at a time when the Iron Age was ending in the Iranian Plateau when all the metals, grails, and rhytons were manufactured all over the empire.

To fabricate containers, tools, and jewelry, it was necessary to extract metals from the mines. For instance, gold was supplied from mines, such as Moute Goldmine, Hamedan, and Kuh Zar in Damghan, while silver was from Nakhlak Mine in Barez and Fars Mountains near Jiroft, Panjhir in Afghanistan, and mountains in Ghour in Bamyan. In addition to domestic mining of precious metals, some precious metals would be imported from Egypt, the land of the Scythians, and from Balkh and India. After turning the metals into containers, tools, and jewelry, they would be exported to subordinate countries (Ehsani, 2007, p 53).

In 1930, during excavations in Hamedan, a treasure was found, where the most important artifacts included two golden rhytons formed like busts of winged lions, one is kept in Tehran and the other in New York. The Golden Cup of Xerxes I<sup>125</sup> was also among the treasures found here, along with a golden cup with the name of Darius II carved into it (Ghirshman, 1997, p 276). Two golden swords were also found and they were decorated with two lion busts and their sheaths were ornamented with the heads of two rams. An important set of golden tablets were also found in this treasure decorated using lion figures. The Oxus Treasure is another important surviving set of artifacts of metalwork from the Achaemenid period and includes 180 objects, such as jewelry, ritualistic figurines, and tablets. The most prominent artifact in this treasure is a golden chariot with four horses and a passenger.

56 golden and engraved tablets were also found in various sizes in the Persepolis Treasure. These tablets include images of horses, camels, and a man with a headband, leg bands, and leg cloth in Achaemenid clothes carrying a Barsam. The quality of the engravings is not very high. In one of the tablets, the image of a man

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125 A trilingual inscription is carved into the golden cup of Xerxes I.

with a sword on his waist is seen and it is similar to the figures in the reliefs of Persepolis. On another tablet, there is a scene of hunting a lion, invoking the image of Ashurbanipal (668-627 BC) relief. There are images of the heads of birds carved on the margins of this tablet invoking the art of Scythians. Carved on another artifact is a small silver fig of a man in Achaemenid clothes and beard. He has a golden armband similar to Achaemenid artifacts, and two griffins head to head with the horns of a ram can be seen.

Among the artifacts in this treasure, there are various gold and silver containers (including a water glass in the shape of a fish), human and animal busts, and human, animal, and bird figurines. Moreover, the handles are shaped like lions, rams, deer, and birds.

The metal containers of the Achaemenid period are significant in terms of technique and artistic skill. The majority of the metal containers and artifacts were made through hammering from the inside (Gunter and Root, 1998, p 3-25). The images on these artifacts are similar to those seen in Persepolis. Using financial sources and a skilled workforce, Cyrus the Great, and then Darius I, realized their artistic projects. The Achaemenid artworks were considered among the artistic media serving the power and image of the king. The realism of Achaemenid art has manifested in the majority of the images on the metal artifacts, especially in the images of the animals. For instance, inside a golden Achaemenid dish, which is unique in its own right, a flying eagle can be seen, whose roots go back to the bronze artifacts of Lorestanm (Fig 112- 113).



Figure 112: Elegant Metal Tableware of the Achaemenid Period Kept in British Museum (*Forgotten Empire*, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 105)



Figure 113: Part of the products of the metalworking industry a-Golden Sword, Achaemenid Period (*Empires of Ancient Persia*, Burgan, 2010, p 96)-b-: Silver and Gold Cup Engraved with the Images of Archers and Imperial Guards (*Empires of Ancient Persia*, Burgan, 2010, p 41)

#### 4.3.1.1.Metal Containers

The majority of metal treasures from the Achaemenid period have been discovered from graves and tombs. Metal containers would bring about a level of the social and political class and respect for the owners, and in some cases, they were used in

commercial dealings as deposits, capital, or common currency. This can be justified based on the discovery of folded artifacts, parts of containers (e.g., the handle or the bases discovered in the Babylonian Treasure), or amphora handles (kept in the Louvre Museum). There have been various classifications proposed for the metal containers of the Achaemenid period in different papers and books. However, it seems that classifying these artifacts with an emphasis on their different applications can be more appropriate, i.e., rhytons, cups, and other metal artifacts.

#### **4.3.1.1.1.Rhytons**

The Dekhoda Dictionary<sup>126</sup> explains that rhytons are golden or iron containers shaped like birds, fish, bulls, or other animals, and they were used for drinking wine in the past. In addition to explaining the lexical meaning of rhyton, i.e., flowing water, Porada defines rhyton in this way, this term refers to containers where the fluid comes out in a narrow stream (Porada, 2004, p 164). When describing and classifying the rhytons discovered in Ziviyeh, Ghirshman discusses rhytons in this way that in addition to the mouth of the container, there is a hole for the fluid to exit which is placed in the snout or breast of the animal (Ghirshman, 1992, p 326).

In Iran, the early examples of rhytons were manufactured from the fourth millennium to the third millennium BC out of clay, bitumen, and then bronze, gold, and silver (Ehsani, 2008, p 66). The Achaemenid rhytons were mainly inspired by the rhyton-making art of the Medes, proving the fact that the Achaemenids were heavily influenced by them. These rhytons are less inspired by Urartian, Assyrian, and Scythian rhytons.

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126 Dekhoda Dictionary is a comprehensive book which includes the description and definition of Persian words. This dictionary was developed by Ali Akbar Dekhoda, who spent 40 years writing this book. Dekhoda Dictionary is one of the largest and most important dictionaries for the Persian language words.

The oldest application of the rhytons probably involved religious rituals, and the ornaments were only carved in these containers to display and induce religious concepts. At the end of these containers, the head of creatures like winged lions, lions, bulls, and rams are seen more than any other creature. In ancient times, the Persians believed that the power of the animal enters the body of a person by drinking. Therefore, they would make rhytons in the shape of animal heads.

These special containers are considered the peak of ancient metalwork, and nowadays, examples of the containers can be seen in many prestigious museums around the world. During this period, rhytons were made in two forms. One was horn-shaped or trumpet-shaped rhytons which were very common, and they would usually be attached to the body of the head of an animal in two ways, i.e., with a right angle or with a mild curve (Fig 114-115), and the second one was bucket-shaped or pail-shaped rhytons (Fig 116). Among the second type of rhytons, there are rhytons with and without handles, directly attached to the head of the animal without any angle.



Figure 114: Rhyton Shaped Like a Winged Lion Ram and Griffin A: Silver Rhyton with Ram Bust, 501 BC, Kept in Metropolitan Museum; B: Silver Rhyton with the Bust of a Griffin, Silver with Gold Coating, Fifth Century BC, Discovered in Erzinçan, Anatolia in Turkey, Kept in British Museum of London (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 122)





Figure 115: Golden Rhyton Shaped Like a Winged Lion A: Golden Rhyton of Ecbatana for Drinking Wine, Shaped Like a Winged Lion, Attributed to Xerxes I, with a height of 23 cm (*Empires of Ancient Persia*, Burgan, 2010, 110; *Forgotten Empire*, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 121); B: Golden Rhyton, Roaring Lion, for Drinking Wine with the Form of a Winged Lion, Hamedan, with a height of 17 cm, Metropolitan Museum of New York



Figure 116: Golden Ram Rhyton Discovered in Hamedan, Kept in National Museum of Iran

#### 4.3.1.1.2.Cups

In general, cups were used for a similar purpose, i.e., to drink wine. However, despite numerous similarities between the cups, there are also some differences. Some cups

are shallow or flat, while some others are semispherical or boat-shaped. The majority of metal cups in this period were made of silver, but the cups for the kings were made of gold and engraved with the name of the king indicating the importance and authority of the kings, and their elevated position compared to the crown prince and other court nobles. For instance, there are cups engraved with the name of Artaxerxes, Xerxes, and Darius. One of the golden cups belonging to Darius includes a trilingual cuneiform inscription in Ancient Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite which repeats the name of King Darius the Great along the entire margin on the exterior edge of the container. This cup is currently exhibited in Metropolitan Museum (Fig 117). Another golden cup with the same features, and slight differences in the shape of the container, which belonged to King Xerxes I, is exhibited in the National Museum of Iran. Around the exterior edge of this cup, the name of King Xerxes the Great is repeated in three languages as well (Fig118).



*Figure 117: Golden Cup Belonging to Darius the Great with a Trilingual Cuneiform Inscription circa 522-486 BC or 432-405 BC, Metropolitan Museum of New York (Davoudi, 2002, p 15)*





*Figure 118: Golden Cup of Xerxes I with Cuneiform Inscription of King Xerxes the Great, 486-465 BC (Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 112; Simpson, 2005, p 112)*

#### **4.3.1.1.3. The Amphorae**

Similar to many metal cups of the Achaemenid period, the amphorae were used for pouring wine in small cups for the guests in ceremonies. These containers, which are also depicted in the reliefs of Persepolis, have been discovered in some different locations. Amphorae with animalistic handles are seen in the hands of Median, Lydian, and Armenian representatives, and an actual example was discovered in Kukova Mogila in Bulgaria (Simpson, 2005, p 105) (Fig 119).

This amphora is completely made based on an Achaemenid style, and it has two handles, one in the form of a ram with a tap on the rear side, where the head of the animal is curved backward-looking at the fluid outlet on the cup, and the second handle in the form of a bull whose head is curved backward. This cup has been dated to the fifth century BC (Zournatzi, 2000, p 687).

Moreover, two amphorae with handles formed like a ram, one made of silver and one made of gold, have been discovered in the Filippovka Treasure in eastern Russia (Trister, 2010, p 238). An amphora with two simple handles and two taps at the

bottom of the container has been discovered in a treasure in Hamedan, which is kept at the National Museum of Iran. Another example of an amphora with handles shaped like a ram, made out of silver with gold ornaments, was discovered in the southern coast of the Black Sea between Sinop and Trebizond, which has three taps at the bottom (Haerinck, 1980, p 43).



*Figure 119: Golden and silver Amphora Golden Amphora, Oxus Treasure (Armbruster, 2010, p 407); and Silver Amphora, Bulgaria (Koch, 2007, p 202)*

According to archeological evidence, the Karabakh Erivan grave in Armenia, along with the artifacts discovered inside it, is attributed to the Achaemenid period. Some of the artifacts in this grave include bronze pendants, an iron spearhead, and a boat-shaped bronze cup, which is a significant type of cup from the Achaemenid period (Razmjou, 2005, p 180). Some of the other important related artifacts are the Ashalgori and Kazbegi treasures in Georgia.

In the reliefs of the Persepolis depicting the people bringing gifts, representatives of Zarangi people, Arachosia, people of Balkh, Parthians, and Aryans (people of Herat) can be seen bringing valuable cups and glasses as gifts or tax for the Achaemenid King of Kings (Koch, 2008, p 117-130). Based on these images, it can be concluded that these areas were highly active in manufacturing such containers.

One of the significant glasses of this period includes four silver glasses attributed to Artaxerxes I. These shallow glasses have similar forms and ornaments. Their edges are simple and curved outward. In the center of the exterior surface of the container, there is a circular indentation surrounded by 14 embossed lotus leaves, while the internal edge bears a continuous inscription (Gunter and Root, 1998, p 3).

The favorite glasses and cups of the Persians are shaped in an embossed form with drop-shaped embosses. Achaemenid cups and glasses with these features were scattered all over the ancient Near East. While the majority of these containers are shallow and without lids, the embossed and drop-shaped forms on the containers have been designed delicately, and they were usually implemented in two different sizes, i.e., larger embosses with narrow tips, and smaller embosses placed between the larger ones (Laing, 1995, p 16). Based on archeological evidence, the images of metal Achaemenid cups and glasses are often accompanied by the images of kings, princes, and Persian nobles. It seems that the metal cups were exclusively used by the wealthy class, while the clay cups were used by the low-level and poor people of the Achaemenid society. The most significant containers were boat-shaped<sup>127</sup> glasses and cups that have been discovered all around the Achaemenid realm including Asia Minor, Egypt, Turkey, Caucasus, and so on. The favorite ornaments used by the Achaemenid for these cups included almond-shaped or drop-shaped ornaments along with plant decorations, especially lotus and rosette flowers whose petals were shaped as tipped bands. Some cups including those attributed to Darius I, Xerxes I, and Artaxerxes I also had royal inscriptions.

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127 Boat-shaped cups with the image of the lotus from the Achaemenid period were inspired by Assyrian artwork (Allen, 2005, p 87-91; Curtis and Cowell, 1995, p 151). Numerous boat-shaped cups made of gold, bronze, and silver have been discovered from all around the Achaemenid Empire, indicating the widespread use of these containers in various regions.

Moreover, these were some of the objects used on the royal table (Moorey, 1974, p 184). These cups were used for two purposes, i.e., (1) in official ceremonies, (2) for their monetary and financial value. These containers were appropriate gifts for the king. It seems that older cups were more circular, and their entire surface was covered by leaf-shaped or elliptical embossed grooves, e.g., the gold cup of Darius I with a simple form and composition (Culican, 2005, p 127; Wilkinson, 1955, p 221-224).

#### **4.3.1.2. Jewelry Making**

Using jewelry was highly common among Persians. In the jewelry of the Achaemenid period, embossed designs and the engravings of the images of animals are used as the dominant style which seems to be rooted in Scythian art. Scythians were highly skilled in making ornaments and jewelry. Some of the related artifacts include bracelets and armbands with animal heads at their end, pendants engraved with crisscross lions, and plaques decorated with winged lions. Another important point is that the Persians were the first people to embed colored stones into gold since they had access to the required raw materials. They obtained gold and silver from various parts of the Iranian Plateau including Kerman, Asia Minor, and India. Moreover, agate, emerald, and azure were obtained from Badakhshan (Vanzan, 2012, p 118).

The most delicate handicrafts or artwork can be found among the jewelry made for the king and the royal officials. The jewelry makers of the Achaemenid period would sometimes visualize the world of the animals with a high level of delicacy, and sometimes get inspiration from a mythical subject, while sometimes immortalizing the world of plants or hybrid creatures. For instance, some of these pieces of jewelry are decorated with the following designs and images: numerous lions (as noted earlier in diagonal or crisscrossed designs), small circular 8-leaf flowers, the image

of a lion in the form of a small bust at the two ends of bracelets or armbands, the bust of a horned mythical bird, a griffin pouncing, deer, the bust of a bearded man with a crown, or a four-legged animal running.

#### **4.3.1.3.Coin Making**

With the advent of the age of metals, a huge transformation began in the evolutionary course of human societies. This was the beginning of the commercial and trade system. Various metals including copper, silver, and gold, and their alloys, such as bronze, would be used to create objects in the forms of ingots, rings, bars, and cubic or circular components, which would be utilized in commercial deals for exchanging value. Ultimately, the need for creating order in economic affairs, the dealings between the nations, and the expansion of commerce resulted in the invention of coins (Sarafraz, 2008, p 5-6).

At the time of Cyrus the Great and his son, Cambyses II, and even during the early reign of Darius I, Lydian coins were still minted as before. However, in circa 505 BC, in the middle of the reign of Darius I, using precious metals as a common currency was a long and old tradition in the ancient east, and this tradition lasted until the invention of coins (Gunter and Root, 1995, p 151).

After creating order in the vast Achaemenid Empire, Darius I focused on organizing internal affairs, the divisions of the country, and the subordinate nations. In particular, he paid a lot of attention to the financial and economic conditions of the empire. After reinforcing the administrative and financial systems, Darius realized the necessity of minting coins. The minting workshop was possibly established after 514 BC by the order of Darius (Sarafraz, 2008, p 11).

Minting coins were legalized during the Achaemenid Empire, and the monetary units used in the Empire were known to many of the subordinate nations. The coins of the

Achaemenid kings were minted in two forms, i.e., one was the Persian daric which was made out of gold, and the other was shekel (siglos) which was made of silver. The value of each gold coin was equal to 20 silver coins, and the coin usually bear the image of the king with a spear in his hand, except for the coins of Darius III, where the king is holding a dagger, and it has an irregular indentation in the back. At the time of Darius III, two-daric coins were minted. In these coins, wavy grooves, the image of two crescent moons, or the forecastle of a ship are engraved.

The coins in Achaemenid satrapies usually have an inscription in three Aramaic scripts, minted at Imperial Minting Houses<sup>128</sup>. Interestingly, even Alexander the Great followed the Achaemenid monetary rules, and minted coins based on daric and shekel (Yalfani, 2000, p 45). The Achaemenid coins were made of gold and silver, and the Greeks called the Achaemenid gold coin, ‘dareikós stater’, and the Achaemenid silver coin ‘Medix siglos’. That is why the Achaemenid gold coins are known as daric, while the Achaemenid silver coins are known as siglos (Rezaee Baghbidi, 2012, p 5) (Fig 120- 122).

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128 At the beginning, or perhaps always, these were minted in Sardis (Nimchuk, 2002, p 60).



Figure 120: Examples of Gold and Silver Coins (*Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 200*)



Figure 121: Examples of Achaemenid Coins Made out of Gold and Silver (*Forgotten Empire, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 58*)

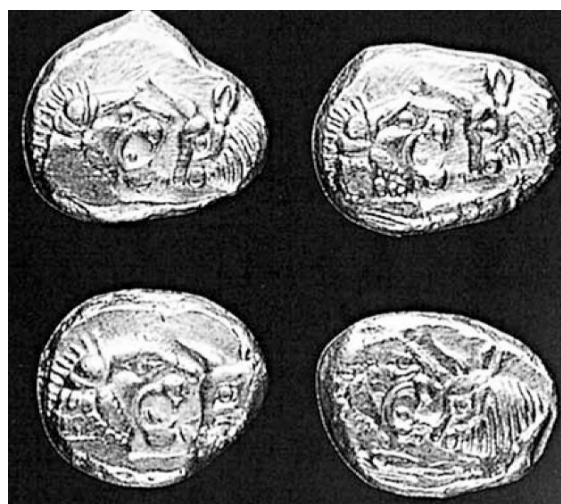


Figure 122: Gold Coins Discovered in Apadana Palace (*The World of Achaemenid Persia, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 130*)

### **4.3.2. Stone Containers**

We can argue that metal cups and containers belonged to the imperial treasury, and they belonged to the wealth and assets of each province. Other containers were also made in this period with different applications, materials, and designs.

Stone containers constitute another group of containers of the Achaemenid period. The material used in a stone container, the manufacturing style, its shape, its application, and most importantly, the images and engravings of the stone containers, as well as the symbols, signs, and scripts and inscriptions engraved on a stone artifact can provide a lot of information for us (Firouzmandi, 2016).

In general, Achaemenid stone containers are very similar to the stone containers of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Merv, Altyn Depe, Shah Tappeh, Shahdad, Tepe Hissar, Susa, Ziviyeh, Ismael Abad, and Sialk which are the continued examples of this art. The significant similarity between the Achaemenid and Egyptian stone containers invokes the idea that such containers were probably manufactured by the Egyptian artists living in Persia (Abdi, 2012, p 85), or these have been sent from Egypt to Persia as gifts or presents (Posener, 1936, p 189). Overall, the probability of Persian art being influenced by the art of various civilizations, especially in the field of creating stone containers, indicates the extensive cultural, commercial, and economic relations between the Achaemenids and their neighbors.

These containers were usually made of granite, marble, serpentine, jasper, limestone, diorite, and so on, while the images on these containers included the following: plant images, such as lotus, and animal images including lion paw, ram, duck, and swan (Firouzmandi et al., 2016, p 86-87).

The artifacts discovered by Schmidt and his colleagues in southeastern Persepolis consist of a total of 626 containers including 317 plates without bases, 40 plated with



bases and 50 trays. The majority of these containers were made of serpentine; however, some are made of marble, granite, and other stones. Whenever a container has an inscription, there is the name of Xerxes I, while the name of Darius is only presented on a few of the containers in Egyptian Hieroglyphs (Koch, 1997, p 216).

The Achaemenid stone containers can be classified into the following groups: (A) cups; (B) plates; (C) trays; (D) mortar and pestle; (E) bottles and vases; and (F) dustkami which are described in detail in the following part.

#### **4.3.2.1. Cups**

stone cups with bases, stone cups with three bases, and simple stone cups.

**Fig 123/A:** Stone Cup with a Base (Granite), Discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept in Persepolis Museum, 486-465 BC

Only parts of the body, a handle, and half of the lower section of this container have survived.

**Fig 123/B:** Stone Cup with Three Bases (Serpentine), Discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept in National Museum of Iran.

This cup whose three bases are formed like the paws of a lion at the end has been broken and repaired, and only parts of its body and bases are intact.

**Fig 123/C:** Simple Stone Cup (Marble), Kept in Archeological Museum of Shahrekord (this cup was confiscated from smugglers. The container includes a cuneiform inscription engraved on the outer surface of the body in eight rows, and it is translated as May Ahura Mazda keep this country safe from enemies, lies, and drought.

**Fig 123/D:** Cup with Base Decorated with the Image of a Lion (Granite), Kept at National Museum of Iran (This container includes a cuneiform inscription which mentions the name of Ashurbanipal.)

**Fig 123/E:** Cup with the Body of a Lion (Marble), Kept in Reza Abbasi Museum (When searching for Achaemenid stone containers, two containers of this form were found. One of them is a cup without a base with a terracotta color. Its bottom is flat, it has a smooth edge, and its base is very short, and the figure of a lion is created on one side of this container. The lower jaw of the lion is attached to the cup and its two hands stick to the two sides of the cup.)



*Figure 123: Stone Cup*

#### 4.3.2.2. Plates

Simple Stone Plates and Stone Plates with Bases.

**Fig124/A:** Simple Stone Plate, discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, kept at the Treasury of Persepolis (The bottom of this stone plate is shallow. Its edge is smooth, wide, and thick, and it has parallel colored traces which can be seen inside the plate.)

**Fig 124/B:** Stone Plate with Base, discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept at National Museum of Iran, 486-465 BC (This stone plate with base is similar to plates used in modern times to serve fruits, and unfortunately, it has been broken and repaired. This plate has a row of an inscription in four languages in Elamite, Babylonian, Ancient Persian, and Egyptian Hieroglyph scripts. The hieroglyph script is inside an ellipse, and it includes the name “The King Xerxes the Great”.)

**Fig 124/C:** Stone Plate with Base (Granite), Discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept at National Museum of Iran, 486-465 BC (This plate is painted with the heads of 12 swans, all of which have put their beaks on the edge of the plate, and they are placed symmetrically to each other. The plate has a circular and hollow base, whose outer edge is protruded outward. Under the edge of the plate, there is an inscription in four languages, which includes the name of Xerxes I (Schmidt, 1957, p 53).)



*Figure 124: Stone Plate*

#### 4.3.2.3. Trays

Circular Stone Trays and Rectangular Stone Trays.

**Fig 125/A:** Circular Stone Tray, discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept at the Treasury of Persepolis, 5-4 Century BC (The edge of the tray is wide, long, thick,

simple, and smooth, and it has a circular and short base, which can be considered as a circular short protrusion the tray is placed over (Schmidt, 1957, p 259).)

**Fig 125/B:** Rectangular Stone Tray (Limestone), Discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept at National Museum of Iran (This artifact has two handles shaped like four duck heads placed opposite each other, while a four-leaf lotus is depicted in the middle. The space between the necks of the ducks is empty, and a hand can easily go through it to make carrying the tray easier.)

**Fig 125/C:** Rectangular Stone Tray, discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept at National Museum of Iran (This artifact has a handle shaped like the head of a duck, while its bottom is rectangular and polished. “Moreover, the edges of the tray are high and smooth, and have four angles” (Hashem Pourmafi, 2006, p 290).)



*Figure 125: Stone Trays*

#### **4.3.2.4. Mortars**

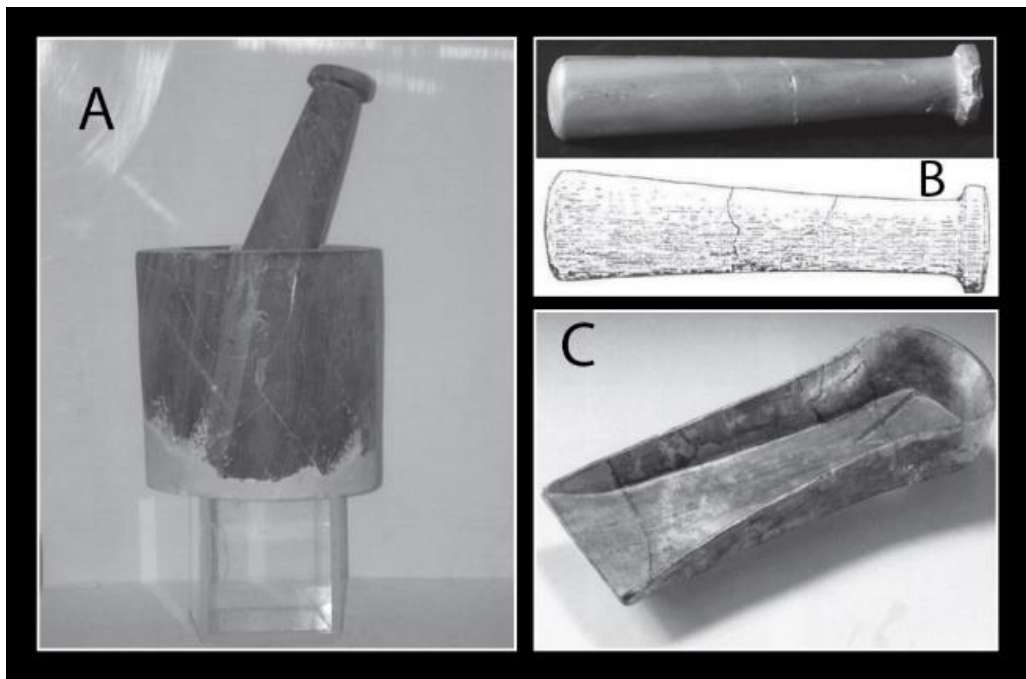
Mortars, Pestles, and Spoons.

**Fig 126/ A:** Stone Mortar and Pestle, discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept at Persepolis Museum (This unique stone mortar has a cylindrical shape. The bottom of the mortar is flat and circular, and it has a wide, thick, smooth, and simple edge, and there is also a pestle that only matches the mortar in terms of size (Ibid. 333).)

**Fig126/ B:** Stone Pestle, discovered in the Treasury of Persepolis, Kept at National Museum of Iran (The top part of this pestle is circular and smooth, and it becomes thicker when moving toward the base. There are traces of some cracks on this

artifact. Moreover, an inscription in Aramaic language is written on the handle (Schmidt, 1957, p 23.)

**Fig 126/ C:** Stone Spoon, discovered in Persepolis, kept at the National Museum of Iran (This artifact has a grey color; it is circular and closed on the one end, while rectangular and open on the other end. The design of a triangle engraved at the bottom of the artifact can be seen. This artifact was discovered by Tajvidi in the southern section of Persepolis in Hall No. 5 (Tajvidi, 1976, p 116).)



*Figure 126: Mortars*

#### **4.3.2.5. Bottles and Vases**

**Fig 127/A:** Stone Bottle (Alabaster<sup>129</sup>), Discovered in Susa, Kept at Louvre Museum (This artifact has an egg-shaped body with two handles attached to that body. On February 6, 1901, Demorgan managed to discover a royal grave in the

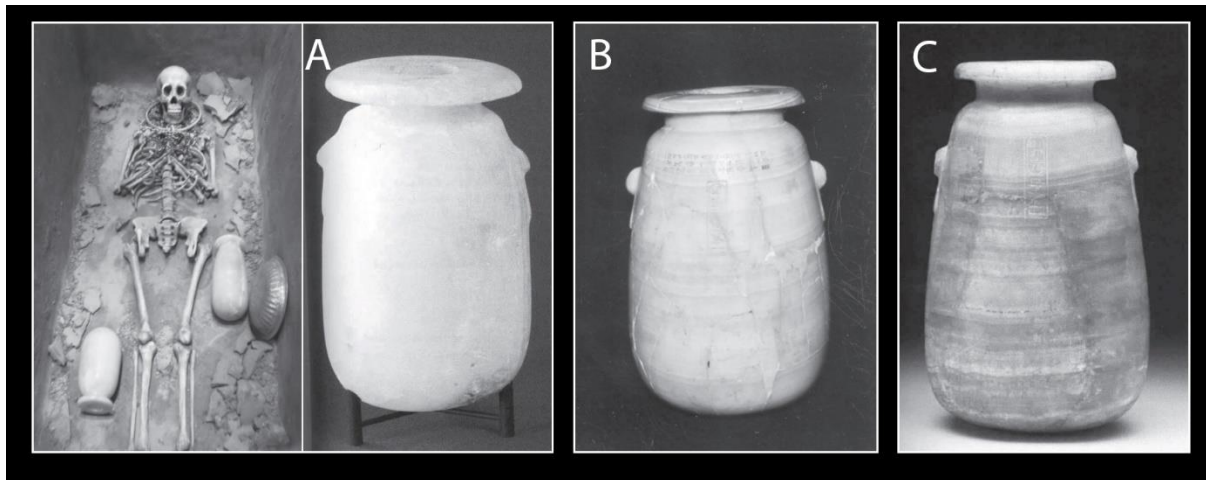
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<sup>129</sup> A type of stone similar to white transparent marble.

Acropolis of Susa. “In that grave, along with other objects, two bottles were discovered, one of them is a stone bottle on the left-hand side near the hip of the skeleton, placed with its top in the upward direction, while the other is placed near the shin of the skeleton with its top-placed downward” (Demorgan, 1905, p 42.)

**Fig 127/B:** Stone Vase (Alabaster), Discovered in Susa, kept at Reza Abbasi Museum, 465-425 BC (The vase has a short neck, which becomes thicker and curves outward at the edge. Its two button-shaped handles were used for easier carrying. On the body of the vase, there are three lines of cuneiform script in Ancient Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian, written horizontally. Under this inscription, there is a line of hieroglyphs written in the vertical form inside a rectangular-shaped box, placed between the two handles. (Saremi, 1994, p 64-66). The inscription on this stone vase includes the name of ‘The Great King, Artaxerxes’ (Hashem Pourmafi, 2006, p 408-409).)

**Fig 127/C:** Stone Vase, Discovered in Halikarnassos, kept at the British Museum (This beautiful artifact was discovered in 1857 by Charles Thomas Newton in Halikarnassos Temple, in southwestern Turkey, in the western part of the Achaemenid Empire (Posener, 1936, 51). This vase has been broken and reconstructed. On the body of the vase, there is an inscription in four languages written using Ancient Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian Hieroglyph scripts. The text of all four inscriptions includes the name of ‘the Great King, Artaxerxes’ (Kent, 1953, xvs, p115). This artifact is similar to the previous one.)



*Figure 127: Bottles and Vases*

#### **4.3.2.6. Dustkami<sup>130</sup>**

a large container with a base used for pouring water or drinks inside and place at public ceremonies.

Kept in Reza Abbasi Museum, 6-5 Century BC (This is a large container for pouring water or drinks inside so that the thirsty can drink from it. “This dustkami is placed on the back of three rams. The bodies of these animals under the container are attached, and as can be seen, the weight of the container has pressed on the necks of the animals, forcing them to bow their heads” (Culican, 2005, p 207).) (Fig 128).

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<sup>130</sup> From an etymological point of view, the term ‘dustkami’ (Duz Kumi) means living for the happiness of friends, having elegance and respect, drinking wine with friends, and having fun with friends.



*Figure 128: Dustkami*

### **4.3.3. Making Seals**

Since the time of Cyrus the Great, employing cylindrical and flat seals, which had had a long history in southwestern Iran, became common under the influence of Elam and Mesopotamia. These seals have dates, and the majority also have inscriptions. The Treasury of Persepolis and Pasargadae is the most important site for discovering the style of the seals used in the Achaemenid court. This site includes thousands of clay tablets and balls sealed by the treasurers of Darius and Xerxes (Schmidt, 1976, p 141-145).

At the present, seals are a window towards ancient societies. These small artifacts were used by authorities or ordinary people to approve and confirm, to identify and authenticate, and to decorate, and they were simultaneously an official symbol and a representation of the taste and creativity of the individual (Dusinberre, 2005, p 323).



The most important artifacts in this category include cylindrical seals<sup>131</sup> from the end of the reign of Darius I to the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes I. The themes of the older Darius seals have more diversity compared to his newer seals, where the image of the triumphant king is engraved exclusively, with slight changes, on the seal (Collon and Porada, 1966, p 35). The seals used by the court administrators had the image of the god of animals without any exceptions, which was one of the most common scenes engraved on Mesopotamian seals. On these seals, the hero, wearing Persian clothing, has overcome two wild animals. In general, in the images on the seals, the god has two animals on both sides in a symmetric manner, and sometimes, the god is standing opposite of and fighting a large powerful animal.

Another rare Achaemenid seal is the Varghan Bird (Simurgh), while the individual riding the bird has a crown of flowers, and the bird is flying (Afshar Mohajer Kalhor, 2012, p 45).

Some of the images on the seals from this period include hybrid animals, such as the sphinx, the griffin, winged animals (winged unicorn, winged bull, winged lion with the body of a bull and the tail of a scorpion, winged goat), bird-man, and Simurgh. For instance, a seal discovered in Susa depicts the king hunting a hybrid animal on the right-hand side of the image, while another hybrid animal with the head of a lion, the body of a bull, and the wings and tail of an eagle is depicted under his feet. Some other hybrid animals seen on the seals from the Achaemenid period are a combination of two animals, e.g., a sphinx with the head of a goat, a winged ram running with his lamb. The image of this ram is very delicate, and his horns and tail are depicted in a spiral form. On the left-hand side, the winged unicorn with the head

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131 Cylindrical seals are seals engraved onto a cylinder, which is hollow from one end to the other to allow the placement of a metal bar or a string, making it similar to an artery. These seals were made out of various objects, and as we will mention, these objects provide ways leading us to their time and history.

of a lion and an open mouth showing sharp teeth, and a single horn on its head depicts a terrifying sight. The presence of a single horn on the head of this hybrid animal is a rare image since, in the majority of images of horned creatures, there are two horns on the head.

Some hybrid animals on the seals of the Achaemenid period are shaped by combining two animals, e.g., a sphinx with the head of a goat, a winged bull with the head of a man, and a winged ram running with its lamb. The image of this ram is highly delicate, and his horns and tail are depicted in a spiral manner. The winged unicorn can be seen with the head of a lion and an open mouth, showing its sharp teeth. The depiction of hybrid animals on Achaemenid seals utilizes various forms of symmetry including reflective, quasi-transitional, and weighted symmetry (Fig 129-132).



*Figure 129: Achaemenid Cylindrical Seal (Left) and Its Image (Right), the Image of a Queen and the Gods (Empires of Ancient Persia, Burgan, 2010, p 79)*



Figure 130: Clay Image of a Cylindrical Seal Depicting Mythical Heroes (*Forgotten Empire*, Curtis, and Tallis, 2005, p 94)

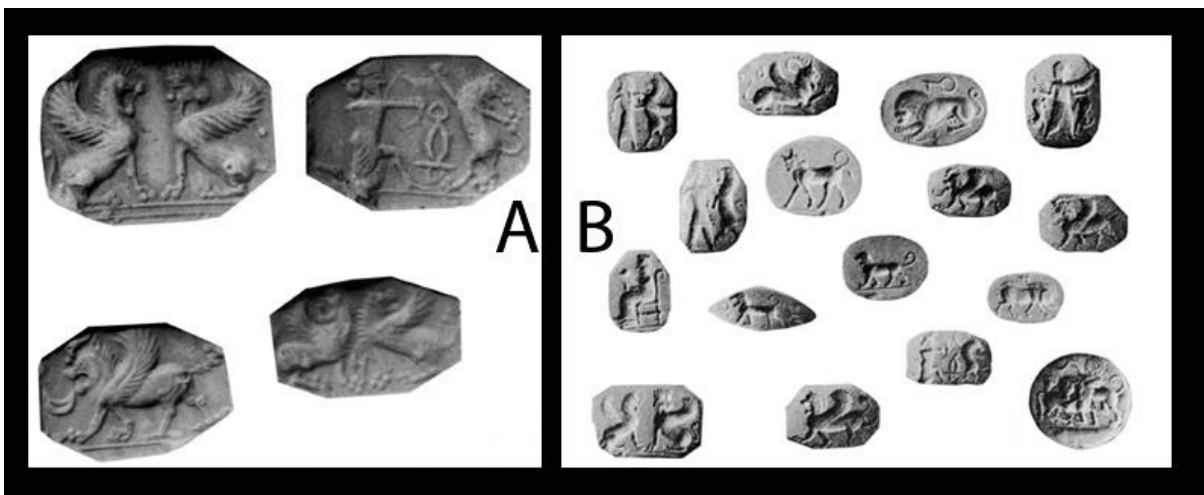


Figure 131: Seals with an Achaemenid Style a-Seals with an Achaemenid Style (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 328) b- Seals from Sardis (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 327)

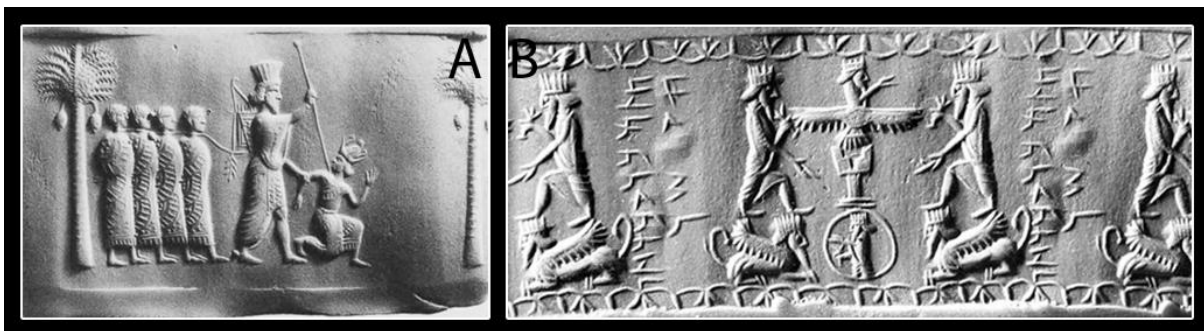


Figure 132: The Seal of Xerxes II a-The Seal of Xerxes III (*The Persians*, Brosius, 2006, p 30)-b- Achaemenid Seals (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 331)

#### **4.3.4. Weaving and Knitting**

Depending on the materials used, the knitting and weaving artworks have much lower durability compared to other types of art (e.g., metalwork, figure carving, stone carving, and so on), and according to the history of dynasties and civilizations, the survived artifacts of this type become rare and limited.

One of the most important fields of weaving of the Achaemenids was carpet weaving. Scholars believe that carpet weaving went from Persia to Altai<sup>132</sup>, and frozen artifacts discovered under the ground or from graves confirm the popularity of this art. Among the discovered artifacts, there were carpets, rugs, and cloth (Ghirshman, n.d, p 360-363).

During recent archeological excavation in recent decades, some frozen graves were discovered in the Pazyryk Valley (in the Altai Mountains, Siberia), beyond the borders of the Achaemenid Empire. Two of these graves included objects indicating the connection between these people and the Achaemenids. In particular, a carpet depicting riders and animals, and a felt pendant depicting a person on a throne and a rider were found. These connections are not easy to explain; however, their presence can be attributed to the commercial relations with remote areas, or even the common cultural heritage between the people of this region and the Achaemenid Persians (Curtis, 2005, p 48). The carpet is known as the Pazyryk carpet (Fig 133), which is known as the oldest carpet in the world. The grave containing the carpet belonged to one of the Scythian rulers.

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132 A group of Turkish people living in Siberia, Altai Republic, and the Russian Altai Krai.



Figure 133: Drawing Related to the Images of Women in the Pazyryk Carpet (*The World of Achaemenid Persia*, Curtis, and Simpson, 2005, p 158)



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